



WASHINGTON COLLEGE

International Studies Review

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International Studies Review

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The *Washington College International Studies Review* is a student journal intended to provide opportunities for undergraduates to publish research articles that contribute to the body of knowledge in international relations and related disciplines, provide fresh insight into the complexities of world affairs, and introduce readers to areas of the world they themselves have not yet explored. The *Washington College International Studies Review* is intended to showcase the research of students of the international disciplines. The journal welcomes writers from all fields of study who have undertaken a project with international concerns at its core, including the areas of politics, economics, literature, art, anthropology, environmental studies, history, and health studies. Washington College students and alumni traveling, working and living abroad are encouraged to submit travelogues for the Notes From Abroad section of the journal.

Electronic submissions and other inquiries should be sent to is_review@washcoll.edu. For submission guidelines, to review past volumes and further information, visit our Web page at <http://isr.washcoll.edu/>.

The International Studies program is an interdisciplinary major that includes faculty from Anthropology, Business, Economics, Foreign Languages, History, and Political Science. In addition to the major, students may choose from five regional concentrations: Africa, East Asia, Latin America, Near East, and Western Europe. The academic program provides students with a strong foundation of theoretical knowledge and practical experience. The curriculum is enhanced with opportunities for internships; study abroad and foreign exchanges; extracurricular activities such as the Model United Nations and Model African Union as well as on-campus programming through the Goldstein Program in Public Affairs, International House and International Studies Council. Our majors have careers and advanced training in teaching, politics, business, journalism, international work, and public service.

Founded in 1782 under the patronage of George Washington, Washington College is a private, independent college of the liberal arts and sciences located in historic Chestertown on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

Contents

Editors' Note	ix
ARTICLES	
Forgotten in Silence: Violence Against Women in Iraq <i>Brittany Doggett</i>	3
A National Shame: Child Hunger in India <i>Tricia Bonman</i>	12
Where None Seem to Exist: Universal Education in Post-Apartheid South Africa <i>Tim Danos</i>	39
Small Arms, Small Soldiers: Understanding Small Arms Transfers and Their Role in the Use of Children in Conflict <i>Maureen Sentman</i>	55
Eradicating Female Genital Mutilation: A Plan for Action <i>Frances Nobes</i>	75
Climate Change and its Effects on World Hunger <i>Carin Janet</i>	101
Feed the People: A Case for Genetically Modified Crops <i>Jordan Larigan</i>	117

NOTES FROM ABROAD

What We Are Up Against is Separation

David Hosey 133

Cambodia is a Happy Place

Tricia Bonman 139

You've Never Volunteered Like This Before

Laura Kennedy 143

Tales of the Mongol Rally

Alex Insel 147

Contributors 155

Colophon 158

Editors' Note

IN 1948, A THEN YOUNG UNITED NATIONS, fresh from the throes of World War II, passed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a landmark pronouncement of the dignity and equality inherent in every individual. Today, more than sixty years have passed and countless people around the world have yet to realize those rights. As such, it is as important as ever that we keep learning, thinking, and dialoguing our way toward a full realization of that document's intent.

Dedicated to that pursuit, we are pleased to present this special human rights edition of the *International Studies Review*. In spring 2009 sixteen students participated in a new course on human rights and social justice. The students were divided into working groups based on what they believed to be some of the most pressing issues in human rights today: hunger and food security, violence against women, child soldiers and access to education. This edition of the *Review* features seven papers from that course, which not only expose abuses but also offer policy recommendations to help alleviate them. The span of human rights topics covered in this journal range from the importance of education in working toward equality in post-Apartheid South Africa to the child hunger and malnutrition that result from gendered-based discrimination in India to violence against women during Iraq's recovery from war and ongoing rebuilding process. Our "Notes from Abroad" section also focuses on issues in human rights, with Washington College students and alumni taking us on journeys with them to the Middle East, Cambodia, Honduras, from London to Ulaanbaatar and beyond. We are fortunate to have these individuals share their experiences with us and encourage students and alumni to continue to submit their stories.


We would like to thank Dr. Tahir Shad, Director of the International Studies Program and Curator of the Louis L. Goldstein Program in Public

Affairs, and Kevin Coveney, Vice President for Admissions, for their financial support. We would also like to thank Diane Landskroener for her excellent production design. Finally, we are grateful to everyone who submitted entries for consideration, and hope you consider doing so again in the future. Without your dedication and enthusiasm, the Washington College International Studies Review would not be possible.

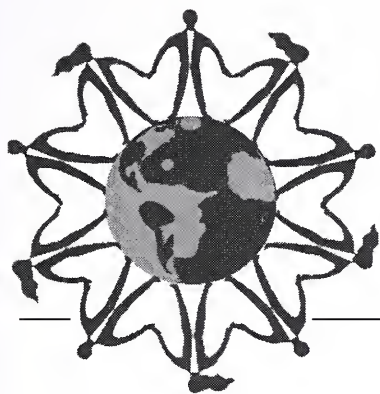
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ARTICLES



Forgotten in Silence

Violence Against Women in Iraq

BRITTANY DOGGETT

THE WOMEN OF IRAQ LIVE IN TERROR. Women face a two-fold threat in war—they are the victims of indiscriminate attacks, but they also face discriminate attacks through the increase of domestic violence, rape and sexual exploitation.¹ Yet the devastating impact of gender-based violence does not stop when the war ends. Rape, kidnapping and murder of Iraqi women has been rampant in the security vacuum caused by insurgency. They fear to step out of their doors. Nearly sixty-four percent of women surveyed in Iraq believed that the violence against women continues to increase in the state, and they felt “there is less respect for women’s rights than before, [and] women are thought of as possessions.”² In another survey, fifty-five percent of Iraqi women reported that they had been a victim of violence since the conflict began in 2003.³ The laws in place to protect women from sexual violence are not strictly enforced, and men who are prosecuted receive lenient sentences. The silence on the issue has been deafening, but the continued oppression of women in Iraq is not only dangerous for women; it is detrimental to the development of the country. Judith Gardam and Hilary Charlesworth note that historically women have had the responsibility of trying to rebuild

communities after conflict, but they are not a part of the decision-making process.⁴ Yet without the inclusion of women, the reconstruction of Iraq will be limited. The Iraq government must take steps towards ending the violence against women and must actively work to ensure that the women of Iraq are part of the rebuilding process. The security vacuum and male-biased laws of Iraq have contributed to elevated violence against women and female withdrawal from society, and without political reforms and increased economic opportunities for women, Iraq and its women will be unable to recover from the devastation of conflict.

The Regression of Opportunity

Years of violence against women have created a culture of discrimination in Iraq, and the reversal of these effects will be a slow and arduous process. Iraqi women were at one time the most educated in the Middle East. During the earlier years of the Baathist regime, women were often part of the public sphere, and "working outside the home became for women not only acceptable, but prestigious and the norm."⁵ During the Iran-Iraq War, the government promoted women replacing the male workers who were fighting, and "Iraqi women were found in virtually all professions and government institutions."⁶ The government encouraged women to have children, and it provided "generous maternity leaves and state-subsidized baby food and equipment."⁷ However, women who were not part of the Baath party were subject to severe human rights violations. During the Anfal campaign in 1987 and 1988, thousands of Kurds were disappeared or killed, and in a mass grave south of Mosul, forensic scientists uncovered the remains of around 300 Kurdish women and children.⁸ Kurdish women were also subjects of sexual exploitation by the government, and after the fall of Hussein's regime, communications from the Kirkuk Intelligence Directorate and the General Intelligence Directorate were found to have listed names of women sent to Egypt to work in nightclubs.⁹ Women related to political and religious opponents were often arrested, tortured and then killed. Rape was popularly used as a form of torture.¹⁰

The sanctions imposed by the U.N. Security Council after Iraq invaded Kuwait quickly deteriorated the country. Health and social programs were decimated by the sanctions, and Amnesty International reports that "women were often disproportionately affected, since they bore the main burden of maintaining the household."¹¹ The high unemployment

led to a regression of opportunity for women, and Nadjé Al-Ali affirmed that “women were pushed back into their homes and into the ‘traditional roles’ of being mothers and housewives.”¹² The women of Iraq once had the highest women’s employment rate in the region at twenty-three percent, but by 1997 it was down to just ten percent. Only eight percent of the population was illiterate in the early eighties, but right after the U.S. invasion, UNICEF found that fifty-five percent of women aged fifteen to forty-nine were illiterate.¹³ Because of their prior situation, the women of Iraq were initially very optimistic about change in government. In a 2004 survey, Women for Women International found that women wanted legal rights and the ability to participate in politics, access to work opportunities, and the education of girls and woman.¹⁴ Women were remarkably positive given the destruction, and an astonishing ninety percent of Iraqi women were hopeful about the future of Iraq.¹⁵ Aaron D. Pina reported that there was “widespread hope, among Iraqi women’s groups, that a new constitution will continue to stipulate wide-ranging, liberal rights for Iraqi women.”¹⁶

An Environment of Fear

Unfortunately, the continued violence has rapidly destroyed the optimism of Iraqi women. In the 2008 report by Women to Women International, only nine percent of women said Iraq would be much better in a year, and seventeen percent of women said that Iraq would be somewhat better in a year.¹⁷ The biggest fear of these women is and has been the lack of security. Following the invasion, the United States did not employ a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration program after the disbanding of the Iraqi army, and many of these young men were joined militant groups so they could provide for themselves.¹⁸ The marginalization of the Sunni population by the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) made the Sunnis fear that they would be oppressed and this fueled the insurgency. The ongoing presence of these militant groups and Islamic sects perpetuates the insecurity of the country, and women have become the victims of “Islamist armed groups, militias, Iraqi government forces, foreign soldiers within the US-led Multinational Force, and staff of foreign private military security contractors.”¹⁹ Iraqi women were and are subject to rape, kidnapping, mutilation, murder, forced marriages and sexual exploitation by these groups, but the violence against women has been treated with

impunity, and attempts by these women to gain justice have led to humiliation, attacks, and threats of death.²⁰

The lack of security prevents women from leaving their homes to seek work or education. Many do not leave their house because women are often been picked up and sold into slavery or prostitution rings. One Iraqi police investigator said that "Some gangs specialize in kidnapping girls, and they sell them to Gulf countries. This happened before the war too, but now it is worse, they can get them in and out without passports. We have so many other cases, we have no authority to solve or investigate them."²¹ Others fear the rampant rape and abuse that occurs on the streets. Only forty-eight percent of women surveyed in Iraq said that they felt protected by the police, and in the central region, over ninety-nine percent of the women said that they did not feel that the police offered any protection.²² Oxfam International recently reported that "Women are less safe now than at any other time during the conflict or in the years before."²³ Women for Women International said that seventy-five percent of women avoid leaving their homes, sixty-three percent of them do not send their children to schools, and fifty-three percent have avoided working or applying for work.²⁴ Over seventy percent of women reported that their families cannot earn enough money for necessities,²⁵ and fifty-five percent of women have been displaced from their homes since 2003.²⁶ Many women are the head of the household, and without jobs, they have few ways to support their families. The deaths of husbands and sons have left them as the breadwinners of their families, but they either do not have the skills necessary to work, or they fear that they will be subject to violence. Without women in the workforce, communities will be unable to recover, and the Iraqi people will remain in poverty. Yet Iraq has done little to protect these women, and in many cases, its laws are actually detrimental to women.

The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defined violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life."²⁷ In Iraq, women are suffering from multiple forms of violence, but the unfortunate silence associated with rape is preserved by the inability of these women to report the crime and bring their attackers to justice. Many of these crimes are targeted attacks against these women. A

pregnant mother in Baghdad was kicked, burned and raped by four men to force her to miscarry because the men said she was the wrong religion.²⁸ "Salma M." was targeted because she was a neighbor of a man connected to Saddam Hussein. She recounted what happened to her:

The raped me in many, many ways. They kept me until the next day. I begged them, I said I have a young child, I said he might die if I leave him alone. And so then they left me alone. When I came home my appearance was so bad, my hair was a mess, my mouth was bloody and my legs too. They burned my legs with cigarettes. They bit me, on my shoulders and my arms. All of them raped me, there were five or six more than the four who kidnapped me, there were ten of the total and I was raped by all ten of them.²⁹

Many women are kidnapped off of the streets, driven somewhere, raped, and then dumped back in the city. Yet attempts to report such crimes are difficult. In 2003, the hospitals in Baghdad said that they treated victims of rape, but Human Rights Watch found that many were being turned away. The hospitals claimed that the women wanted forensic examinations, and they could not do that.³⁰ Saba A., a nine-year old rape victim, was turned away from the forensic center and Medical City, the complex of hospitals in East Baghdad.³¹ She continued to bleed days after the attack, and a CNN journalist finally managed to get her help. A woman has to have an official referral from an officer or a magistrate to get a forensic test, and Baghdad has only one location for examinations: the Institute of Forensic Medicine. The institute only staffs men, does not provide any medical care for victims, and shares the building with the city morgue.³² Reporting sexual crimes is also difficult because the Iraqi police force is male, and the "police downpla[y] reports of rape, at time indicating that women and girls provoked rape by venturing out of the house before the city was safe."³³

The negative treatment of women by the police and hospitals is compounded by discriminatory laws. The inclusion of honor killings in the Iraqi Penal Code also prevents women from reporting incidences of rape. Rape is a felony under Iraqi law, but there are exemptions for "honorable motives" and "disciplining a wife by her husband, the disciplining by parents and teachers of children under their authority within certain limits prescribed by Islamic law (Shari'a), by law or by custom."³⁴ Women fear

that if they tell their male relatives that they have been raped, they will be killed to preserve the honor of the family. The U.S. State Department reported that in Basrah, thirty-seven women were killed over a nine month period, including six honor killings and nine domestic violence deaths, and the police force believed that this showed the declining violence.³⁵ Yet Rand Abdel-Qade was killed by her father because she befriended a British soldier, and her mother was killed a few months later after divorcing her husband over the incident.³⁶ Both of their deaths were deemed honor killings by the national media.³⁷ The Kurdistan Regional Government reported that there were five hundred and eight honor killings in the region in 2007, but most human rights groups and UNAMI believe that the incidences are underreported.³⁸ Honor killings are not the only threat faced by women who report that they have been raped. The Penal Code also allows rapists to receive a reduced sentence if they marry their victim.³⁹ Lieutenant Colonel Saif Ghaleb of the West Baghdad Police Headquarters told Human Rights Watch, "This is part of our law, the kidnapper and the kidnapped are married so that there won't be other cases, of revenge."⁴⁰ The law fundamentally misunderstands the physical and psychological trauma that accompanies rape. Iraq law says that a woman cannot be forced to enter into a marriage, but women are often pressured and threatened by their own families into marriage. Marriage to their attacker punishes these women for being victims, as "they are likely to endure marital rape or other sexual and physical violence."⁴¹ Such a solution to rape has nothing to do with justice. Instead, it allows men to circumvent the system, and it reduces the number of women who report their rape cases to the authorities.

Jeanne Ward and Mindy Marsh report that "many of the conditions that exacerbate sexual violence against women and girls during conflicts also contribute to other forms of violence against them."⁴² The oppression of women in Iraq and their subjugation to traditional roles was intensified by the violence of the insurgency, but it was also institutionalized by the government. The government "ignores the difficulty of getting women's advocacy and rights implemented, and the near impossibility of affirming voice and agency through existing institutional structures."⁴³ According to Yanar Mohammed, president of the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, "they left the women of Iraq in this new constitution as a victim of Shariah law."⁴⁴ She comments that the constitution "has led to an increase

in poverty, women heading single households, polygamy, teen marriages and even sex trafficking and forced prostitution, a claim backed by the State Department report.⁴⁵ Mohammed fears that the constitution is too close to a strict interpretation of Islamic law and that “all of a sudden, Iraq is wearing black and scarves.”⁴⁶ Yet the constitution alone is not the reason that these women wear black. In Iraq, there has been a backlash against women who do not adhere to conservative notions of female behavior.

MP Safia al-Suhail, for instance, said that “over the past six months 15 women were killed in al-Salam neighborhood for religious reason or because they had criticized the militants, or because of their previous affiliation to the Baath Party.”⁴⁷ Yet a local resident revealed that it was local Shia militiamen in the Mahdi army that were responsible for the attacks and that they were accusing women of being informants, being prostitutes or not wearing headscarves.⁴⁸ In Basrah alone, fifteen women a month are killed for “breaching Islamic dress codes.”⁴⁹ Those working for human rights and women’s rights have also come under the target of these groups. Sahar Hussain al-Haideri was a journalist “who covered the situation of women and criticized Islamist armed groups for their attacks on women’s human rights.”⁵⁰ She was killed on June 7, 2007 by an Islamist armed group, Ansar al-Islam. In Sulaimaniyah, a safe house for abused women was attacked, and an unnamed woman received four gunshot wounds.⁵¹ US supported women’s centers throughout the region became especially common targets of attacks and threats. Amira Salih, director of a center in Karbala, stepped down after receiving numerous death threats, while one activist was stopped by the police and told not to enter a woman’s center because it was “an unsafe location.”⁵² Aquila al-Hashimi, a member of the Iraqi Governing Council, was killed in September of 2003 by men opposed to her political views, and Amal al-Ma’amalachi, an activist and founder of the Advisory Committee for Women’s Affairs in Iraq and the Independent Iraqi women’s Assembly, was killed in November 2004 when her car was perforated by gunshots.⁵³ The violence against these women has created an atmosphere of fear that Iraq must escape if they wish become grow and develop as a state.

Mutilation is also occurring at unfortunately high levels in Iraq. Amnesty International reports that from July 2007 to June 2008, 262 women were severely injured or died from international burning in the Kurdish region alone.⁵⁴ Female genital mutilation exists in northern Iraq,

and interviews conducted by the NGO WADI found that 907 of the 1,544 women they interviewed in the Germian area had undergone FGM.⁵⁵ Forced marriage is also too common in Iraq, despite being prohibited by Personal Status Law. The practice of using women as compensation for a killing, as well as the practice of "*jin be jin*," which "involves the exchange of girls—the girl from one family marry the son of another... while his sister is given in marriage in return"⁵⁶ occurs with little or no repercussions.

The women of Iraq have essentially been segregated through violence and robbed of their rights. Yet women must be reintegrated into the workforce and given equal status in society if Iraq wishes to become a stable country. The microbusinesses that are usually run by women and that are key to development are missing. Many Iraqi families continue to starve because their female household heads earn no income. Yet the lack of security and unchecked violence must be controlled before women can take up such roles. Charlotte Bunch states that "violence as a development issue is linked to the need to understand development not just as an economic issue but also as a question of empowerment and human growth."⁵⁷ Unless the Iraqi government addresses this issue and begins investing in its women, stability will not be possible.

Ending the Violence

Ending discrimination and violence against women in Iraq will be a multi-dimensional process that will take years if not decades. The equal treatment of women must be addressed at both the international, national, and local level. The Iraqi government especially must send a message that it will not tolerate violence against women. Iraq is party to both the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Amnesty International believes obliges Iraqi "authorities to take immediate steps to ensure women's equality and protect in practice the human rights of women and girls."⁵⁸ Iraqi law cannot be allowed to condone violence against women. The Penal Code must be revised so that honor killings are no longer legally permissible. The KRG has already removed the use of "honorable motives" from its Penal Code,⁵⁹ and the IGC must do the same. However, the rampant use of honor killings within the Iraqi culture means that the government must actively work to reverse this trend and explicitly outlaw such acts. The lives of women must be treated with

the same respect as those of men. The Iraqi government must also amend the Penal Code and remove the clause that allows for men to receive more lenient sentences if they marry the women that they have raped. Women suffer from this law, and the men escape the punishment that they deserve. Domestic violence law does not exist in Iraq, except for the exemption of liability for husbands and parents who discipline their children and their wives. The Iraqi government must address the issue of domestic violence because married women deserve to have rights. However, in the creation of laws and codes to deal with domestic violence, the Iraqi government should be advised by a body of women from multiple backgrounds, including medical and legal. The majority of men would not be able to understand domestic violence from the perspective of the victim, and this view must be taken into account if the law is to treat everyone equally. Any new changes to Iraqi law must be enforced. The government must also actively ensure that the principles that are already a part of Iraqi law are also being pursued.

Rape and forced marriages are both illegal under Iraqi law, yet both are committed with impunity by the Iraqi population. Crimes against women, whether rape, murder or other forms of violence must be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Amnesty International suggests that the Iraqi government should "provide training in gender issues to police officers, prosecutors, judges, and other officials in the criminal justice system to ensure that women are encouraged to report violence in the family, and receive appropriate care, medical attention and support,"⁶⁰ but reporting violence should go beyond that perpetrated by family members. Women must be encouraged to report rape as well. They must be provided with counseling services and treatment after they are raped. If the Iraqi government is unable to provide these for its people, then the international community should offer its services. However, the hospitals in Iraq could easily provide such services. They must be encouraged to provide treatment to rape victims. They should also provide therapists for those who have suffered violence. The Iraqi government could support this by subsidizing the cost of the therapists. Changing such policies would not be difficult, but changing the minds of the people involved is. Many women do not believe that their attackers will ever be brought to justice, and this must change. Amnesty International also suggests that women's rights organization should be a part of the reform of the judicial system,⁶¹ and this is

crucial to changing the way that rape cases are handled. The crimes must be thoroughly investigated, trials must be fair, and the sentences must be appropriate. The inclusion of women's rights group in the reform of the judicial system can help stem some of the male-biased actions of the courts, although any signs of improvement may take years. The current inability of the Iraqi police force to investigate these gender-based crimes could be combated through the inclusion of women into the criminal justice system.

The creation of police taskforces to handle issues of violence against women could begin the process of providing women with jobs and also ensure the investigation of filed grievances. Amnesty International believes that all parties involved in conflict must "establish adequately funded, independent and transparent monitoring and inquiry mechanisms with the power to promptly investigate any credible allegation of violence against women and make public their findings."⁶² While the creation of a police force would not establish an independent and transparent mechanism for inquiry, it would be a step in that direction. Although the Iraqi government would have to entice women to leave the safety of their homes by offering high salaries, the women members of the police force could be trained to protect their own safety when traveling to and from work. The male officers currently do not have the skills or the training to adequately handle problems arising from violence against women, but the education and training of these women could be specialized so that they can address such issues. Proper investigation methods and documentation would have to be a key component of the training, but they could also be taught how to talk to victims of violence and how to make sure that the victims receive help. Women may think that other women will be more sympathetic towards them, and this could increase the number of cases of violence reported. The full implementation of such a policy could take years due to the necessity to train the women, many of whom may be illiterate, but the program could begin the program in one region and then slowly expand to the others. The inclusion of male officers may be necessary, especially during the formation of these forces, but caution must be exercised to make sure that these men do not abuse their stations and harass these women. International support will be necessary to help provide the training of these women, and international NGOs could be used to monitor the early stages of the programs, but the Iraqi government

could also rely on national women's rights groups to report abuses of male power within these taskforces. However, this would only provide a relatively small number of women with jobs. The Iraqi government must create and support the formation of centers that specialize in educating and preparing women to be a part of the workforce.

U.S. centers created to help educate women and provide them with job skills have been the targets of violence. Safehouses, as well, have been attacked by men who wish for women to remain in more traditional roles. Yet these centers are crucial because few members of the female population of Iraq have held jobs before. The Iraq government must make sure that those who attack these centers are caught and punished to the full extent of the law. They must adopt a policy of no tolerance for violence against both education centers and women's shelters. Women's shelters must be given special protections so that women escaping violence are not subject to violence. The current programs in place must be expanded so that a wider range of women are offered opportunities. Although the Iraqi surplus is decreasing and the government had to cut \$13 billion from its draft budget in November of 2008,⁶³ the government of Iraq should invest in its future by creating centers and rebuilding schools to ensure the girls and women are educated and able to contribute to society. In the long run, this will be far more beneficial to the country. The threat of violence would still be in the air, but the government could offer financial assistance to women who would be willing to attend these centers. If a few women attend the center without incident, then this will encourage other women to attend. Iraqi women could be trained to fill the inadequacies that exist in Iraqi society. These centers would not prepare women for jobs that require higher education, such as forensic scientists, but they would teach them basic skills. Women could be taught how to collect data so that they could collect documentation of the abuses against women. They could also be taught how to run microbusinesses, and NGOs could be brought in to help provide microcredit to these women. Women for Women International points out that the use of small-scale generators in communities would provide badly-needed electricity, but it would also provide opportunities for women because people would need to be trained in the maintenance and upkeep of the equipment.⁶⁴ Policies such as this would provide the community with a valuable resource and give women new opportunities.

The international community also must play a significant role to end

the violence against women. The reformation of Iraqi law is unlikely to occur unless outside pressure is exerted upon it. Both governments and NGOs need to be involved in the process. Iraq must be made to live up to the international agreements it has signed, especially the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Yet simply getting Iraq to acknowledge these rights of women is not enough. Political pressure may force the IGC to change its laws, but it cannot change its policies without outside funding and resources. Iraq may remove the protection of honor killings from its Penal Code, but this does not mean that it is being enforced. Watchdog NGOs will have to be vigilant in their reporting of the situation, and governments must not ignore the ongoing human rights violations. The changes suggested above will all need the support of the international community. The implementation of education programs for women will be expensive and time-consuming. They will need to be monitored to see if they are making progress, but they will also need to be monitored for corruption. The international community also cannot ignore the immediate needs of the country. The 2009 Consolidated Appeal for Iraq and the Region has only received thirty-nine percent of the 230 million dollars it requested.⁶⁵ This money is supposed to be used to help with the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and provide assistance for the refugees. The women of Iraq are suffering from starvation and abject poverty, and until the government changes its laws and policy, the aid is desperately needed by the women.

Iraq must change its policies. It cannot continue to condone violence against women. Women must be treated equally and fairly under the law, and they must be given the economic tools to provide for their own futures. The continued oppression of women in Iraq will hinder the development of the country. Women are the ones who are leading families, but they are unable to earn an income to support them. They cannot leave their homes, but even if they could, they do not have the skills necessary to find work. They are too fearful to allow their children to go outside and go to school, effectively crippling future generations. Under the current Iraqi system, they will not be able to lift themselves out of poverty. The women of Iraq are suffering, and unless changes are made, all of Iraq will continue to suffer with them.

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A National Shame

Child Hunger in India

TRICIA BONMAN

ALTHOUGH INDIA IS OFTEN HAILED FOR ITS achievements in the economic sphere, in the realm of alleviating child hunger and malnutrition it continues to lag behind the developed world, and indeed many other developing nations. India has more undernourished people than any other country in the world, more than all the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa combined, and is home to the largest child population in the world.¹ Within the larger problem of hunger in India, the problem of child hunger is a source of “national shame,” according to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.² Government programs have thus far failed to satisfactorily address the problem. A fifth of the large population of India is undernourished, and nearly 50 percent of children under the age of five are underweight for their age.³ Moreover, over a fifth of child mortality worldwide takes place in India alone, and it is estimated about half of these deaths of children under five are linked to malnutrition.⁴ Within the larger specter of child malnutrition in India looms the matter of gender inequality; female children in India are on average more malnourished and the inferior status of adult women puts them at a disadvantage when caring for their children. A comprehensive solution to the problem of child hunger will have to include provisions that

contribute toward gender equality, increased agency for women, and equal rights for women and female children.

It is especially pertinent to discuss this issue in light of the global food crisis currently gripping the nations of the world, growing worse due to the economic bedlam, creating a perfect storm for child malnutrition to multiply. Food prices have risen dramatically, and the "price shock now roiling world markets is destabilizing governments, igniting street riots and threatening to send a new wave of hunger rippling through the world's poorest nations," India among them.⁵ The economic crisis "has pulled an additional 119 million people below the poverty line" and many fear cuts in aid to developing countries as richer countries struggle to save themselves.⁶ Countries already suffering from malnutrition issues are hard hit by the economic fallout. USAID's Food for Peace Program and the World Food Program are enduring a reduction in purchasing power.⁷ The situation is acutely felt in India, where a shocking 50 percent of the world's hungry reside, and a country the Global Hunger Index labels as being in an "alarming" position.⁸ India ranks 66th out of 88 countries on the Global Hunger Index and is one of 33 countries where hunger is identified as a "major threat."⁹

This context of global turmoil is the one in which child malnutrition in India will have to be addressed. Today, there is "broad recognition that hunger exists as a social and moral problem, [and] that the nature and extent of the problem are well understood...there is widespread recognition that access to food ought to be a universal human right."¹⁰ Hunger is a complex and formidable issue for a country as demographically and geographically diverse as India, especially with the sheer number of impoverished people within the country. The problem of hunger in India is only one of many challenges the country faces. Malnutrition is further complicated by these myriad concerns, but it is one matter that should have priority. However, the recognition of the right to access to food has been slow to find acceptance in the country.

The Right to Food in India

Food is "the most basic human need" and a "central indicator of absolute poverty and physical well-being," and it is a basic need that has gone neglected in India for many years.¹¹ India has suffered in the past from "large-scale famines" although today hunger "'outbreaks' in India are

described as transitory, episodic events, temporary deviations from the norm" due to natural events.¹² The tragedy is that these events are ruinous for many people "only because they live so close to the edge of disaster under normal conditions. India could feed all of its people, but it does not."¹³ By not recognizing the fundamental right to adequate food, India does not fulfill its obligations to its people. The government ascribes to a "narrow view of the meaning of 'starvation,'" relying on a definition that considers only adult deaths that are directly due to lack of food when "in fact, most deaths associated with malnutrition are due to a combination of malnutrition and disease."¹⁴ In a positive development, a writ petition was submitted in April 2001 by the People's Union of Civil Liberties to the Supreme Court of India asking three questions:

Starvation deaths have become a National Phenomenon while there is a surplus stock of food grains in government godowns. Does the right to life mean that people who are starving and who are too poor to buy food grains free of cost by the State from the surplus stock lying with the State...[that] is lying unused and rotting?...Does not the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India include the right to food?...Does not the right to food which has been upheld by the apex Court imply that the State has a duty to provide food especially in situations of drought to people who...are not in a position to purchase food.¹⁵

The writ has provoked dialogue about the role of the state in providing its people with adequate food, and the Supreme Court has asked government agencies to "identify the needy within their jurisdictions and to ensure they receive adequate food," clearly establishing that "the court understands the right to life...as implying the right to food."¹⁶ However, implementation of policies that ensure this right to food has not been perfect, as evidenced by the thousands of malnourished people living in India and the million children who die every year due to causes attributed to malnutrition.

Physical and Societal Consequences of Malnutrition

The malnourished and undernourished children that survive in India are likely to suffer from stunting, low weight, and "varying levels of cognitive impairment" due to protein-energy malnutrition (PEM).¹⁷ PEM is

"found predominantly in low-income countries where poverty is widespread" and can manifest in "potentially fatal nutritional disorders" known as *kwashiorkor* and *marasmus*.¹⁸ Children who suffer from *kwashiorkor*, which typically occurs around age 2 and is caused by protein deficiency after weaning, are afflicted with stunting and swollen bellies which belie the fact they are "wasted skeleton[s]."¹⁹ Marasmic children share many of the symptoms of *kwashiorkor*, in addition to weak hearts, wasted muscles, very low disease resistance, and subnormal body temperatures. They have often been neglected from birth. *Marasmus* typically manifests in even younger children, from six to eighteen months old, and are often "deprived of maternal attention as well as food," requiring emotional as well as physical nourishment.²⁰ Malnutrition causes immune system breakdown, greatly increasing disease vulnerability. Pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children are at the greatest risk for becoming malnourished.²¹

The effects of malnutrition in youth are also manifest later in life, making malnourished children less productive workers due to health problems. Child hunger is detrimental both in terms of economic and human capital. It would be in the economic interest of India to invest in its children further to curb child malnutrition. Children who suffer from malnutrition experience as adults "delayed motor development, general effects on cognitive development...a greater degree of behavioral problems and deficient social skills...as well as...deficient learning and lower educational achievement."²² All of these contribute to a less productive workforce, and toward the next generation also suffering from the same problems. Nutritional stunting due to PEM is especially risky for female youths because it may result in "short maternal height and a small pelvis," which can later cause "obstructed labor due to cephalo-pelvic disproportion, with consequences...ranging from chronic morbidity from infections of the reproductive system and conditions such as vesico-vaginal fistulae to even death in childbirth."²³ Malnourished mothers are more likely to have children with low birth weights, putting them immediately at risk for malnutrition. Girls are the most probable to suffer from malnutrition among children, giving rise to a cycle of malnutrition from one generation to the next.

The phenomenon of "son preference" exists in India, and it is "both a consequence and a cause of the low status of women...it arises as a result of women being considered as playing only unimportant roles...this undervaluation in turn leads to lower investment in females," which

contributes to the lower status of women, creating an endless circle from which it is difficult for women to escape.²⁴ Often in impoverished societies, "children who are expected to be more economically productive adults receive a larger share of family resources and have a greater propensity to survive," and these children are more than likely male.²⁵ As a result, female children are more likely to suffer neglect, often in the form of malnourishment.

A study in India found that "among children hospitalized for PEM boys outnumbered girls by between 47-53 to 1, but field studies showed that PEM was 4-5 times more common among girls."²⁶ Even among families that did not live in poverty, differences exist in feeding patterns of girls and boys. Although not necessarily malnourished, girls received less nutritious food than their male siblings.²⁷ Infant and child mortality for girls is high in areas of India characterized by high levels of gender inequality, despite the fact that "excess male mortality is the biological norm."²⁸ Studies of nutritional status among children in India consistently find that "a child's sex...more consistently accounted for variations in nutritional status than any of the other variables."²⁹ Women, and indeed all of society, are socialized to see sons as a more promising investment, when in fact the challenges of child hunger and mortality could be more successfully approached by a greater focus on the welfare of female children.

The low levels of investment in female children are creating another damaging cycle. The survival of *all* children, regardless of gender, has been found to be inextricably linked to the well-being and agency of the mother; if the mother has been systematically disadvantaged in terms of food and access to other opportunities, her children or future children will suffer as well. The "low status of the woman...puts her in a poorer position to care for children, especially her daughters."³⁰ Improving the status of women in India could have a tremendous effect on child hunger. It has been discovered that "the effect of female literacy on child mortality is extraordinarily large. It is more powerful an influence in reducing child mortality than the other variables that also work in that general direction."³¹ By advancing the cause of gender equality, the Indian government could see compelling results in reducing child mortality and child malnutrition.

Government Response

The Indian government is currently employing the largest child feeding

program in the world, the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme. The ICDS was put into force in October 1975 and is today a 1.3 billion dollar program.³² However, pouring money into the problem does not seem to have worked —after more than thirty years of operation, rates of child malnutrition in India still are some of the highest in the world. The backbone of the ICDS program is its network of 700,000 community *anganwadi* workers. However, its effectiveness has been “limited...by a variety of factors, ranging from the limited skill and knowledge of *anganwadi* workers to a lack of supervision, vacancies and flaws in programme policy, such as inadequate focus on very young children.”³³ PEM can set in at a very young age, and it is necessary that the government recognizes the vulnerability of infants and incorporates appropriate policies into ICDS.

The greatest “windows of vulnerability” for malnutrition to occur in children are *in utero* and within the first two to three years of life, as young children have higher growth rates and therefore a greater nutritional requirement.³⁴ ICDS should devote more attention to prenatal care and nutrition of pregnant women, especially mothers who are themselves “the product of a malnourished childhood.”³⁵ A study by UNICEF found that low-cost improvements could be made to the ICDS program that significantly improved undernutrition rates. These improvements can be made at the cost of 150-200 dollars per village per year, which “represents 9-10 per cent of the government’s ongoing ICDS costs per village per year.”³⁶ These improvements were the early initiation of breastfeeding, vitamin A supplementation, and higher immunization rates. Vitamin A is particularly effective in reducing the severity of infections, and has been “demonstrated to lead to a reduction of 23% in mortality among children one to five years of age.”³⁷ The implementation of fairly modest programs and improved training of existing volunteers can go a long way in combating the problem of child malnutrition. The importance of preventative programs in addition to recuperative programs cannot be overstated; child malnutrition, especially for children younger than two, has permanent consequences that cannot be amended later.³⁸

Malnutrition and Inequality

Trying to increase food supply and availability often are approaches used for a solution to child malnutrition, but it has been discovered that “child hunger...is only modestly reduced by recent increases in the supply

of food.”³⁹ This argument comes from the reality that “malnutrition is largely a reflection of poverty: people do not have income for food.”⁴⁰ Naturally it follows that increasing income will decrease malnutrition, but this assumption is actually not the case. The real issue lies with both food and income distribution and ensuring disadvantaged groups have access to the food supply. Indeed, “per capita income growth that is accompanied by high levels of social inequality will tend to generate little or no reduction in hunger.”⁴¹ Reducing social inequality and problems of distribution would have more of an impact on hunger reduction. In fact, rapid income growth may even have negative effects as these higher income populations “are consuming disproportionate levels of “primary calories,” and in so doing may be denying poor people elsewhere access to grains and other components of a basic diet.”⁴² India’s GINI index score of 36.8 belies the fact that 80 percent of India’s population lives on less than \$2 per day; Mark Giemen writes that the “GINI index alone does not yield enough information to indicate what proportion of a country’s people are poor—even if we know the country’s total income. A measure omitting that crucial concept doesn’t get to what people really mean when they talk about inequality.”⁴³ Furthermore, as previously mentioned, female children, mothers, and pregnant may not see the advantages of an increased income as male children and adults are primarily the beneficiaries of a better diet.

In order to truly defeat child malnutrition, the political problem of endemic inequality must be addressed; the endurance of inequality is “key to the persistence and increase in child hunger rates.”⁴⁴ In this vein, it has been widely recognized that there is a link between women’s agency and rates of child malnutrition —increasing opportunities education for women and decreasing the sex differential that exists in feeding patterns of children would greatly reduce rates of child hunger. Increased education about nutrition is also necessary in order to allow women and families to choose food that is more nutritionally valuable. Changing “structures of power” by investing in the education and healthcare of women “not only...improve their own life opportunities, but better-educated women are also better able to make informed choices for families as well as themselves.”⁴⁵ Society as a whole stands to benefit in a myriad of ways by giving women increased agency. India now ranks 128th out of 177 countries on the Human Development Report’s Gender-related development index; there is a long way for the country to go.⁴⁶

A Rights-Based Approach

Regarding power structures and “the establishment of entitlements to food,” the way the Indian government views the problem of malnutrition and undernutrition in the country is problematic.⁴⁷ A change in their perspective, through a more widespread understanding of the right to food as a universal human right, is necessary if the related causes of inequality and reducing malnutrition are to advance. When queried about the status of children’s nutrition rights, “the Department of Women and Child Development answered by listing the country’s numerous programs for child care and feeding...apparently fail[ing] to grasp the distinction between having feeding programs and having a right to food.”⁴⁸ Even though India is a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which “defined and formalized the right to food as a basic human right,” the right to food has not yet been fully realized in India’s law or feeding programs, which stand to benefit from a rights-based approach.⁴⁹

Kent suggests that India’s most successful child feeding program, the Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Project (TINP), could have proven even more beneficial by incorporating human rights principles.⁵⁰ TINP was a World Bank-funded project initiated in 1980 with the intention of improving the “nutritional status of preschool children, primarily those 6 to 36 months old, and pregnant and nursing women.”⁵¹ It operated until March 1989 and was followed by TINP-II, which ended operations in December 1997. Since 1997, some of its activities have been absorbed into the ICDS program. TINP has “come to represent the ultimate success for the World Bank’s lending for nutrition.”⁵² However, TINP was not without its flaws. TINP workers, also known as *anganwadis*, often found that record keeping and data collection became paramount above children’s welfare. An *anganwadi* worker noted that she was expected to carry out calculations far beyond her education and abilities, and that “managing the books and keeping careful records of numbers became much more important than actual action since supervisors depended on this information as written evidence that the programme was ‘effective.’”⁵³

Kent writes that the program could have been improved by formulating criteria for supplementary feeding in terms of entitlements, such as “every child assessed to be severely malnourished is entitled to a double ration,” and by informing parents that they had a right to claim services for their

children.⁵⁴ If turned away, parents and children should be able to seek some type of redress. This change in language and implementation might increase the amount of children the program is able to reach. 77 percent of eligible children enrolled in TINP, and there has not yet been an analysis of why children were not enrolled or why children exited from the program earlier than the program specified.⁵⁵ In addition, boys participated and benefited from TINP in higher numbers than girls; a rights-based approach might also decrease instances of gender inequality.

Women's Agency and Malnutrition

TINP was also guilty of incorporating gender bias into the program. It identified "poor caring practices of the mother as the underlying cause of malnutrition," and made this assumption part of their training program for health workers.⁵⁶ In hypothetical nutrition negotiation scenarios distributed by the World Bank to health workers, "when the mother states that she is 'too busy' to feed her child, instead of discussing structural factors that constrain a woman's time, the health worker attributes it to her lack of patience."⁵⁷ There is a lack of recognition that women may face structural difficulties, such as lack of access or education, that affect their ability to devote all their time to their children, instead censuring women for their perceived impatience. Women are "blamed for not having certain attributes, such as knowledge or patience, to properly care for their children."⁵⁸ This hypothetical conversation, written by World Bank staff in Washington, D.C., also assumes that women are able to determine the amount of food their children receive, when it is men who make those kinds of decisions in Tamil Nadu.⁵⁹

Although men may make the decisions in Tamil Nadu, it is imperative to recognize that "the limited role of women's active agency seriously afflicts the lives of *all* people —men as well as women, children as well as adults."⁶⁰ The Indian government should introduce policy that specifically targets women, with the goal of increasing their access to "agency aspects" such as education, literacy, property rights, and an economic role outside the family.⁶¹ These aspects, although they may seem removed from the goal of reducing child hunger, stand to make an impact by giving women the ability to be less dependent and to make informed decisions about the healthcare of their children. Increasing women's agency may help to increase their social standing and enhancing their status within the family.

Additionally, within India, it “emerges that women’s education and women’s employment are the two most important influences in reducing fertility rates,” a goal the government has been working towards in tandem with the problem of child malnutrition.⁶² Health workers often bring up the issue of family planning when meeting with mothers in the community about the nutrition of their children. One health worker with an NGO states, “The reason these kids are unhealthy is because of the size of the family. They keep having kids until they can have a boy.”⁶³ The Indian government is aware of this mindset among the population as well. According to an Indian government official, “...mothers are in touch with [community health workers]...so we can know how many children they are having and also try to make sure they have fewer kids. The huge problem for India is population size.”⁶⁴ Addressing structural issues that limit women’s agency will in turn effect social change, influencing positively the related challenges of population size and child malnutrition.

A factor in the low participation of women in daily economic affairs is “a relative lack of access to economic sources.”⁶⁵ In order to combat this lack of access, India could implement a program similar to the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh as a method of empowering women. The Grameen Bank, a microcredit movement spearheaded by Muhammad Yunus, “has consistently aimed at removing the disadvantage from which women suffer...by making a special effort to provide credit to women borrowers.”⁶⁶ The bank enjoys a repayment rate of nearly 98 percent, a testament to the manner in which women will respond to opportunities presented to them.⁶⁷ The Grameen Bank has helped generate “major changes in society,” as a sharp decline in the fertility rate in Bangladesh has “clear connections with the increasingly higher involvement of women in social and economic affairs.”⁶⁸

It is imperative to treat the causes of child malnutrition and not simply the symptoms, and in the case of India, one of the major causes is the lack of agency experienced by women. The Indian government should pursue policies that improve women’s access to agency-increasing opportunities, such as education and economic capacity. The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh is an outstanding example of what can be achieved when women are given the opportunity to succeed. The endemic gender inequality in Indian society perpetuates the problem of child hunger, as does the

Indian's government slow movement in recognizing food as a universal human right in its national law. India has the responsibility to fulfill its promises to its people.

Future Action

The Ministry of Women and Child Development should implement policies that specifically target pregnant women and children under the age of two, the groups most vulnerable to malnutrition, to be recipients of aid and supplementary feeding, and should set out specific objectives and weighing targets to be followed in order to track nutritional goals. Children under the age of two are at risk for damage that cannot be undone later. The government of India should be held accountable for ensuring the 1.3 billion dollars poured into child feeding programs are going where they should be going; to feeding programs for young children and pregnant women, making certain young girls are receiving proper care and attention, and training for *anganwadi* workers. The programs ICDS implements should be rights-based, formulated in terms of entitlements. Research should be conducted as to why children are not enrolled in programs they are eligible for, and why they withdraw from programs before they should. It should be made clear to *anganwadi* workers that their goals are to help malnourished children and women, not merely to count them. These improvements are fairly modest and low-cost, and could make a huge difference in the campaign against child malnutrition and hunger.

However, the plight of child malnutrition and hunger is indelibly linked to the plight of women in India. As long as women are relegated to a lower social and economic standing and male children are privileged over female children, malnutrition will continue to plague the country. Including women in the economic sphere and increasing their social status is the only way to ensure the cycle of child malnutrition will be broken. Women can be powerful agents of social change, and it is time the government of India recognized the extent of the transformation of society they can generate. It is time for the revolution Mary Wollstonecraft wrote of over 200 years ago to come to pass; "it is time to effect a revolution in female manners—time to restore to them their lost dignity—and make them, as a part of the human species, labor by reforming themselves to reform the world."⁶⁹

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Where None Seem to Exist

Universal Education in Post-Apartheid South Africa

TIM DANOS

Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages.¹

-Article 26, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UNIVERSAL EDUCATION, as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is an essential dynamic to the human condition and expands intelligence and reason throughout the global community. Moreover, education is an intrinsic element to the human rights agenda, as it “will open doors where none seem to exist,”² and is particularly vital to alleviating conditions of poverty and dissimilating racial barriers within society, as well-informed and well-educated citizens tend to hold higher levels of cultural, economic, political, and social power.

In the case of the Republic of South Africa, historical challenges to universal education have been brought forth by European imperialism and the apartheid system of the 21st century, as well as current economic, political, and social aspects that significantly affect the republic’s education system and impede the achievement of goals for social equality in the region. Additionally, universal education in the region has been deterred by provisions of the 1996 South African Schools Act, such as the “school

fees" provision, which has led to many challenges and unintended consequences for the educational system in South Africa.

By examining socioeconomic factors, the Millennium Development Goals established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2000, recommendations proposed by NGO's and well-respected peer-reviewed scholars, like Dr. Yusuf Sayed of the University of Sussex, a deeper understanding of the complexities in the South African educational system will emerge and so will ideas and proposals to reform a system that can potentially open up doors and opportunities to a greater number of South Africans.

Similar to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa declares that "everyone has the right- a) to a basic education, including adult basic education; and (b) to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible."³ As illustrated by the Constitution, the notion of universal access to education is presented as a principle ideal of the country and acknowledgment of education as a human right. Yet, there are challenges to this ideal within the historical context of the apartheid system and its subsequent effects on the education system that are manifested through racial and cultural barriers. Moreover, current challenges to the post-apartheid system, including the national economy versus 'individual' economy, poverty and social inequality, and problems with education funding, especially through school fees provisions, confront the implementation of universal education within the Republic of South Africa.

Historical Context

If the native of South Africa today in any kind of school in existence is being taught to expect that he will live his adult life under a policy of equal rights, he is making a big mistake.

— *Hendrik Verwoerd, 1953*⁴

In the case of the Republic of South Africa, considerable thought must be given to the historical apartheid system that perpetuated colonialism, economic segregation, and, as noted by Edgar Brookes, existence of "the only education system in the world designed to restrict the productivity of its pupils in the national economy to lowly and subservient tasks, to render them non-competitive in that economy, [and] to fix them mentally

in a tribal world.”⁵ The blatant oppression of the South African government was carried out through legal and political maneuvers like the Bantu Education Act of 1953, through which the government “assumed control over the education of Coloured and Asian children.” Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd believed that an inclusive education for Africans would advance their social and political status and impede the movement for social advancement. He stated that “native education should be controlled in such a way that it should be in accord with the policy of the state” and that “there is no place for [Africans] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour.”⁶

Furthermore, the segregation-era South African educational system was not only discriminatory in a legal and political sense, but also manifested itself intellectually and culturally in the classroom. White dominance in the educational system was transmitted to the school curriculum, where white educators obliged students to syllabuses and class texts that “treated the history of the history of South Africa as the record of white settlement and had no empathy with African culture, the African side of conflicts, or the condition of Africans since the conquest.”⁷ Also absent were a cultural understanding of factions like the Zulu and Xhosa people, African resistance during the South African War of 1899-1902, and working conditions for migrant workers during the Mineral Revolution in the late 1800’s. Some Africans, like Z.K. Matthews, illustrated their experiences as students within the apartheid system, who were often taught from textbooks expressing the racist viewpoints of Afrikaners:

Our history, as we had absorbed it from the tales and talk of our elders, bore no resemblance to South African history as it has been written by European scholars, or as it is taught in South African schools, and as it was taught to us at Fort Hare...The syllabus for matriculation emphasized South African history, so...we struggled through the white man’s version of the so-called Kaffir Wars, the Great Trek, the struggles for control of South Africa...and...we had to give back in our examination papers the answers the white man expected.⁸

This apartheid system maneuvered an oppressive education system to disenfranchise native South Africans economically and socially, as the poor education of native Africans perpetuated the cyclical pattern of social

hierarchy and poverty, which Verwoerd eluded to above. Moreover, the apartheid educational system grossly subverted African culture through a historical framework dominated by the Afrikaner and European perspective and denied the history of a people. This exclusive curriculum suggests the dominance of one culture over another, deterring native South African participation not only in the classroom, but in the broader South African society, while demonstrating a devastating challenge to the notion of universal education as a tool of advancement within society.

As the apartheid system dissolved in the mid-1990s, education was considered to be "a critical element in post-apartheid restructuring"⁹ for the African National Congress (ANC) led by Nelson Mandela, the first black president in the republic. J.D. Jansen noted that "the making of education policy in South Africa is best described as a struggle for the achievement of a broad political symbolism to mark the shift from apartheid to post-apartheid society,"¹⁰ as "coloured" and Asian students would be liberalized from white leaders that established policies of white dominance, especially in education. This reformed system would decrease racial barriers along economic, political, and social lines and provide the republic with a phenomenal opportunity to advance universal education based on the political change set forth by the 1994 South African general elections.

Yet, despite the phenomenal opportunities that enabled post-apartheid restructuring of all aspects of South African society, the current educational system faces many challenges congruent to each other under a socio-economic umbrella of budgetary challenges and the fees schools provision under the South African Schools Act of 1996. This act also affects net enrollment rates, completion rates, and infrastructural challenges, like access to technology, which all deter the advancement of educational, as well as socioeconomic opportunities to the *ukusokola*, or impoverished, South Africans.

*The South African Schools Act of 1996, 'Fees' Schools,
and the Implications for States and Individuals in South Africa*

When the South African Parliament passed the South African Schools Act, it addressed past "racial inequality and segregation"¹¹ and legislatively formulated that the school system "advance the democratic transformation of society...combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance...[and] protect and advance...diverse cultures

and languages.”¹² While the Act moved progressively towards advancing the cultural and social rights of underrepresented groups, it proved to be less progressive in the categories of the “eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of society”¹³ through the incorporation of fees for state schools, whereby the government provides an apportion of education funding, and parents contribute to “basics and extras in the form of school fees.”¹⁴

Blade Nzimande, who served in the South African Parliament from 1994-1999 as Chairman of the ANC Study Group on Education, stated that while the African National Congress wanted to provide “free and compulsory education” in post-apartheid policy, considerations were given to the fiscal “demands...made on government.” If due to such restrictions the system was unable to meet these universal goals, however, then a “mediocre system across the board [would exist],” where depleted funds for the school systems would severely limit the potential growth of those school systems.¹⁵ Following these circumstances, the Study Group recommended “parents who could afford to pay for their schooling to do so” by implementing a clause for fees under section (39) in the South African Fees Act, No. 84 of 1996, which determines that school fees “may be determine[d] and charged at a public school.”¹⁶ So-called school “fees,” could theoretically provide additional revenue for schools and promote public-private relations. However, those school fees could consequently perpetuate socioeconomic inequalities within the republic, as a majority of impoverished Africans are unable to pay the imposed school fees.

Within the South African Schools Act, there is substantial language that attempts to prevent the potential perpetuation of social inequality. According to Anthony Lemon, there is a legal framework in South Africa mandating that “no can be excluded from a state school because his or her parents are unable to pay the fees”¹⁷ and that “parents [can] qualify for a fees reduction if the household income is less than 30 times the annual fee.” This framework is accurate, as point (b) of subsection (2) in section (39) of the South African Schools Act allows for “equitable criteria and procedures for the total, partial, or conditional exemption of parents who are unable to pay school fees.”¹⁸

However, there are mechanisms that some schools can utilize, intentionally or unintentionally, like a “geographical feeding area” to view certain geographical demographics, which would increase applicants to their

schools and potentially “screen out” those who are unable to pay the school fees.¹⁹ Yusuf Sayed of the University of Sussex noted several instances where blacks were deterred from attending schools such as Eastdale School on the Eastern Cape of South Africa, where conditions indicated that families had to be able to “afford [the school fees at Eastdale]...in order for their children to be part of the school.”²⁰

Sayed also elaborates on the financial implications of school fees for parents and introduces the concept of levels of parental citizenship. On one hand, they are considered “individuals with citizenship rights” and as entitled recipients of government-offered education. Yet, the parent model shifts when the variable of school fees enters, as the parent playing the role as a “school citizen” must assist the state by funding those schools through fees. The educational system cannot be successful without the marriage of these interdependent parts, as entitlements must be guaranteed to citizens with the public-private agreement on funding for those collective goals. Sayed’s “school citizen” model presents an interesting perspective on the relationship between the state and the individual and the various challenges presented to this relationship through the phenomenon of school fees. As socioeconomic conditions are taken into account, such as the state of the national economy and ‘individual’²¹ economy with the impact of poverty, this interdependent relationship is constrained by one or both of the parties’ ability to contribute to their mutual interest, universal education. In contemporary times, for instance, the South African economy has not been immune to the spread of the current global economic recession. The current official unemployment rate is 21 percent, impinging particularly on South African citizens living in a state of poverty, which undermines their role as a “school citizen” participant, particularly if they are unable to afford the fees.²²

The relationship between the state and ‘school citizen’ is particularly challenged by these socioeconomic burdens on the poor. Some proponents of school fees, such as the World Bank, would argue that this policy model promotes a “sense of ownership” in education and that “parent expenditure reflects a *willingness* to pay on the part of those making the payment.”²³ Yet, Kevin Watkins of Oxfam International disputes the term “willingness,”²⁴ which implies that exigent circumstances are not factored into a parent’s inability to pay school fees, but rather, that personal characteristics are principal factors in this conflict. Furthermore, Watkins notes the

economic difficulties for poor households, as 'basic' demands, like food, and "unexpected expenditure demands," like health care and prescription costs, significantly affect the 'individual' economy and often make the investment of education virtually impossible for their family.²⁵ As these socioeconomic circumstances perpetuate throughout impoverished communities, education systems are affected significantly, especially through factors like low net-enrollment rates²⁶ and completion rates.²⁷

These socioeconomic factors also have consequential effects on the educational system from fiscal challenges presented to public educational services. Joel Samoff notes that the deterioration of "public services and... the inability of governments to meet their commitment to move toward schooling for all their citizens" has a substantial impact on educators as "low salaries forced teachers to look outside their classrooms to supplement their incomes, curriculum revision and textbook preparation proceeded slowly if at all, and [because of those conditions], morale plummeted."²⁸ Furthermore, depredated school conditions also significantly affect teacher morale and "it is not uncommon to find a teacher standing in front of 80-100 pupils who are sitting on a dirt floor in a room without a roof, trying to convey orally the limited knowledge he has, and the pupils trying to take notes on a piece of wrinkled paper using as a writing board the back of the pupil in front of him...[and where] there is no teacher guide for the teacher and no textbooks for the children."²⁹ These particular factors highlight the socioeconomic challenges not only to the implementation of universal education, to the implementation and *maintenance* of a functional educational system. Such factors also challenge the notion of 'willingness' to participate in the interdependent system between the state and the individual versus the vast challenges within the republic. Furthermore, these challenges present cyclical problems facing South African education and society, as school fees promote economic and social advancement, but are challenged by the economic realities facing many South Africans, especially in the Eastern Cape.³⁰

In order to measure the implications of these factors on education standards within the republic, Lemon examines the impoverished Eastern Cape province of South Africa, exploring school and social conditions and inequalities within their school system. Lemon notes that factors such as a lack of urbanization, as the Eastern Cape has a 42.9 percent level of urbanization compared to the national average of 56.1 in 2000, which affects

potential development and progress in areas like access to employment and technology.³¹ Furthermore, unemployment, the most common cause of poverty within the region, ranges from 32 to 42 percent based on various measurements of employment, which affects an individual's living conditions and their ability to afford school fees.³² Another significant challenge to educational advancement is the lack of access to technology, as many schools do not have the infrastructure for technology or computer equipment, which not only prevents those students from cultural, economic, and social interaction with the international community, but also from building skills essential to a technology-driven globalized world.³³ Furthermore, Lemon also explores the city of Grahamstown, which was previously a prominent region under the apartheid system, serving as an interesting case study of the lingering effects of the oppressive apartheid system. Similar to the Eastern Cape, unemployment rates reach 60 to 70 percent, which is attributed to the city's growth in population (from 62,640 in 1996 to 100,000 in 2001), as well as a limited employment base. This creates concentrated areas of poverty that affect school systems within the region.³⁴

Furthermore, Lemon, like Watkins, examines aspects such as completion rates in Grahamstown, including a study of Nathaniel Nyaluza High School where pass rates for Senior Certificate (the South African equivalent of a high school diploma) dropped from 61.97 percent in 1999 to 35.58 percent in 2001, which affects cultural, economic, political, and social advancement, as completion of the Senior Certificate leads to the opportunity for a highly-educated workforce. Additionally, the results reflect the impoverished conditions of the 'individual' community, where nearly 200 parents had not paid their fee installments to Nyaluza High School. Similar to the studies of Eastern Cape schools, Lemon explores similar school conditions, like facilities (only one of four schools in the region near Nyaluza had a functioning library), access to technology³⁵, and other conditions that affect the advancement of education at Nathaniel Nyaluza High School in Grahamstown, South Africa and economic development within the region.

Though the school fees provision of the South African Schools Act of 1996 has presented inherent challenges to impoverished regions, it has not necessarily led to these dilapidated conditions in regional schools throughout the Eastern Cape, Grahamstown, and South Africa as a whole. There are independent socioeconomic factors ranging from the state of the

national economy (i.e. unemployment) to the 'individual' economy (i.e. basic demands and unexpected expenditures) that affect the interdependent relationship between the state and the individual, which negatively affects the funding of schools, overlapping to the conditions of the educational system and performance mechanisms like net enrollment rates and completion rates. Despite the effects of social inequality throughout the republic, government policies have defended fees policies in the past, noting school fees as a mechanism for improving schools conditions and even declared that the school fees policy "represented a major innovation in South African school funding both in terms of financing systems and pro-poor resourcing"³⁶ through a public-private partnership. At the same time, they inaccurately describe the conditions in the post-apartheid educational system in the Republic of South Africa, as Sayed notes that when addressing school equity, the policy has had a "unintended outcome" of tending to benefit "the previously advantaged...new deracialized middle class...middle-class and wealthy parents," which ironically favors the social dominance policies based in the apartheid system.³⁷ Finally, at the heart of these challenges and unintended outcomes lies a flawed policy that detracts from the possibility of cultural, economic, political, and social advancement made possible by the 1994 South African general elections.

Findings, Recommendations, and Conclusion

The Republic of South Africa faces many significant challenges not only to the ultimate extension of universal state education, but even just for a basic *maintenance* of schools within the republic. The oppressive apartheid system perpetuated and propped up racial barriers, denied Africans of further exploration of their heritage, and used the educational system to further a social hierarchy. Furthermore, current economic, political, and social elements challenge the educational system, which not only affects the advancement of universal state education, but deters even incremental improvement and basic care for school systems. In light of those conditions, if the South African educational system is to advance, the following recommendations should be considered, further elaborated on, and potentially implemented by the South African government, especially under the renewed leadership of Jacob Zuma and the African National Congress (ANC). These recommendations not only come from my findings, but also

derive from scholars, NGOs, and others that specialize in the studies of the South African educational system.

First, the republic's human rights agenda should be reviewed, reassessed, and should examine whether or not education is a priority in the agenda. While the South African Constitution recognizes basic state education as a fundamental right for all citizens, the implementation of this policy is often challenged by outside conditions. If universal education is considered to be a fundamental ideal for the republic, then the South African government and people should recognize it as such and begin a process of incremental investments and increased school expenditures, especially in particularly impoverished regions like the Eastern Cape and Grahamstown, where ratios of urbanization, unemployment, access to technology, and low completion rates for Senior Certificates tend to be double that of national ratios.

Furthermore, national policies should be considered and formulated to address infrastructural challenges, like access to education, perhaps within the timeline of the Millennium Development Goals of 2015. Additionally, national policies should address the creation of jobs, particularly in predominately impoverished areas like the Eastern Cape, where unemployment is the most common condition to cyclical poverty within the region.

Moreover, the policies considered and formulated by the South African parliament should be implemented within the recommendations and timeline of the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the United Nations in 2000, which set the following targets for promoting education and economic and social advancement globally.³⁸ First, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty, defined as less than \$1 per day, should be reduced to at least half by 2015. Second, by 2015, the death rate for infants and children under the age of five should be reduced by two-thirds of the 1990 level in all countries. Maternal mortality rates should fall by three-quarters of their 1990 level by 2015. Finally, it is recommended that primary education should be universal by 2015, with the disparity between girls and boys in primary and secondary schools eliminated by 2005.

Finally, the most immediate recommendation is the reduction of and eventual elimination of fees in state schools. Lemon argues that "ending the practice of charging fees in state schools" would lead to "equality of opportunity" and that the larger part of the republic's education system should be focused on the "needs of the urban and rural poor."³⁹ Furthermore,

Gene Sperling⁴⁰ highlights the effects of a reduction or elimination of school fees in other African countries, like the United Republic of Tanzania, where net enrollment increased from 1.5 million students in 1996 to 3 million students in 2002.⁴¹ Additionally, this reduction in school fees and eventual elimination will alleviate the stresses of an interdependent relationship contingent upon the state of national economics and 'individual' economics, where cyclical socioeconomic conditions most affect the "school citizen's" ability to fund their children's education, which in turn affects performance rates, such as net enrollment rates, completion rates, the depredation of school conditions, and school morale. While there may be much complexity in finding alternative funding models, there should be a focus on models that could lead to long-term alleviation of cyclical poverty and general growth.

Education should be a fundamental right of every individual and is intrinsic to the promotion of the human rights agenda, as it has an extrinsic value that can provide the means to other ends, like the promotion of other aspects of human rights, like alleviating poverty, social equality, and more. Universal education, as indicated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, is an essential element to the human condition and expands intelligence and reason throughout the global community. In the case of the Republic of South Africa, Afrikaner and European imperialism perpetuated inequality through the apartheid system, including the Bantu Education Act of 1953, establishing institutional changes that have been challenging to the post-apartheid system. Currently, economical aspects, like national economics and 'individual' economics affect the interdependent relationship necessary to advancing South African education in the 21st century. However, through a close consideration of proposals and recommendations, including: considering education as a significant part of the human rights agenda, beginning incremental educational investments in poor regions like the Eastern Cape and Grahamstown, formulating national policies that address infrastructural challenges, including access to technology, formulating policies to alleviate unemployment, attaining to the guidelines of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and reassessing the school fees system, will all go a long way in reforming the South African educational system and, as noted by Mark Mathabane, will open doors where none seem to currently exist.

ENDNOTES

1. United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Geneva, 1948, <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html#a26>.
2. Mark Mathabane, *Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a Black Youth's Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa* (New York: Free Press, 1986), 123.
3. R. Ahmed and Yusuf Sayed, "Promoting Access to Enhancing Education Opportunities? The case of 'no-fees schools' in South Africa," *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 39 (2009): 211.
4. Hendrik Verwoerd was the Minister of Native Affairs of South Africa in 1953 and has been attributed as the "Architect of Apartheid."
5. Anthony Lemon, "Redressing School Inequalities in the Eastern Cape: South Africa," *Journal of South African Studies* 30 (2004): 269. Anthony Lemon is a professor at the Mansfield College and School of Geography and the Environment at the University of Oxford.
6. Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2000), 196. Mr. Thompson is the Charles J. Stille Professor of History Emeritus at Yale University and director of the former Yale Southern African Research Program.
7. *Ibid.*, 173.
8. *Ibid.* Z.K. Matthews was a student from the provinces of Lovedale and Fort Hare. Despite originating from this oppressive system, he was able to become a lawyer and received a master's degree from Yale University.
9. Anthony Lemon, "Redressing School Inequalities in the Eastern Cape: South Africa," *Journal of South African Studies* 30 (2004): 269.
10. *Ibid.*, 270.
11. In the preamble of the Act, the act addresses the gross racial barriers within the education system by noting that the achievement of democracy in South Africa has consigned to history the past system of education which was based on racial inequality and segregation..."
12. South African Parliament. *South African Schools Act of 1996*. No. 86 of 1996.
13. *Ibid.*

14. The Republic of South Africa website, <http://www.southafrica.info/about/education/education.htm>, 2 Jan 2010.

15. Yusuf Sayed and Jonathan Jensen ed, *Implementing Education Policies: the South African Experience* (Landstowne, South Africa: Juta Academic, 2001), 41.

16. South African Parliament. *South African Schools Act of 1996*. No. 86 of 1996.

17. Anthony Lemon, 269.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Yusuf Sayed, "Overcoming Exclusion in Education," Minority Rights Group International, State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2009, , July 2009, 27.

21. When I describe the 'individual' economy, I am referring to not only personal finances, but to this notion that the community and history play a significant role in shaping the 'individual' economy.

22. Alex Perry, "Zuma, South Africa's Next President, Now Must Prove Himself," *Time*, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1893623,00.html>.

23. Kevin Watkins, *The Oxfam Education Report*. Oxfam International (Dorset, UK, Oxfam International, 2000), 176.

24. Ibid. Watkins notes that it is plausible to conceptualize circumstances where "poor people may be willing to pay [for school] in principle, but [are] unable to pay in practice." Watkins uses the case of Zambia, where healthcare fees were increased in 1994, but health services deterred as circumstances like severe drought and household incomes declined. While the nature of the Republic of Zambia and health care policies have different characteristics than school fees in South Africa, there may be analogous variables, like the role of exigent circumstances affecting the interdependent relationship between the state and individuals, where as this relationship deteriorated, so did the overall quality of services, which may provide a lesson for the school fees model in South Africa.

25. Watkins, 178.

26. Net enrollment rates are defined as the "proportion of children aged between 6 and 11 who enroll in school." This rate provides a measurement for Education Performance Index (EPI), which is a series

of methodologies that tracks performances of schools (Watkins 136). Accordingly, South Africa is ranked as 40th in 104 countries for educational performance based on this model of assessment.

27. Completion rates are defined as “the proportion of students who progress beyond Grade 4” (Watkins 136).

28. Joel Samoff, “No Teacher Guide, No Textbooks, No Chairs: Contending with Crisis in African Education,” *African Studies Association*, Philadelphia, 1999: 6.

29. Ibid. As a side note, Samoff’s study and these conditions were subject to African education in general and less specifically attributed to South African education, which I only note as a precaution of exaggerating school conditions in South Africa.

30. Ibid.

31. Lemon, 269.

32. The rates of unemployment are 32.0 percent (strict rate) and 41.5 percent (expanded rate), as opposed to 29.5 percent (strict rate) and 41.5 percent (expanded rate) in 2000. The measurements of strict rates apply to unemployment levels where the unemployed are not *actively* seeking work and expanded rates are applied to levels where the unemployed *are actively* seeking work. Lemon notes that the 2000 figures are probably closer to the expanded rate as “many of the unemployed have ceased to look for work... because they see no prospect of finding it.”

33. In the Eastern Cape, statistics from 1996 indicated that computer:learner ratios were 1:558 compared to the national average of 1:254.

34. Lemon, 278.

35. The computer:student ratio is 1:174 at Nyaluza High School. Additionally, as the school did receive computer equipment from Rutgers University and the World Bank, but the community lacks the infrastructure, like internet access, to use these technologies to the fullest extent.

36. R. Ahmed and Yusuf Sayed, “Promoting Access to Enhancing Education Opportunities? The case of ‘no-fees schools’ in South Africa,” *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 39 (2009): 205. This statement came from a policy brief from the Department of Education in South Africa in 1998.

37. Ibid., 209.

38. Kevin Watkins, *The Oxfam Education Report*. Oxfam International

(Dorset, UK, Oxfam International, 2000), 16. After realizing the implications of child health and maternal health for the collective human rights agenda, I believe that these two factors are indeed intrinsic to the promotion of education, as the conditions for child death rates are devastating from a humanistic perspective and have implications for variables like net enrollment rates, completion rate, and gender equity.

39. Anthony Lemon, "Redressing School Inequalities in the Eastern Cape: South Africa," *Journal of South African Studies* 30 (2004): 289-290.

40. Gene Sperling is the Senior Fellow for Economic Policy and is the Director of the Center for Universal Education at the Council of Foreign Relations in Washington, DC.

41. Gene Sperling, "The Case for Universal Basic Education for the World's Poorest Boys and Girls," *Council on Foreign Relations* (2005): http://www.cfr.org/publication/9739/case_for_universal_basic_education_for_the_worlds_poorest_boys_and_girls.html, 2.

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Small Arms, Small Soldiers

Understanding Small Arms Transfers and Their Role in the Use of Children in Conflict

MAUREEN SENTMAN

"I did learn some things when I was with the rebels. I learned how to shoot, how to lay anti-personnel mines, and how to live on the run. I especially knew how to use an AK-47 twelve-inch, which I could dismantle in less than one minute. When I turned 12 they gave me an RPG, because I had proved myself in battle."

— *Abducted Child Soldier, Northern Uganda*

CURRENTLY, THERE ARE OVER 300,000 CHILDREN fighting wars and insurgency movements in more than 87 countries.¹ In some of these conflicts, children serve as combatants because ongoing war, poverty or disease has resulted in reduced numbers of available adult males to serve as combatants. Many armies and groups recruit children, too, because they are the most easily manipulated segment of the population, and their immature understanding of right and wrong (and life and death) means that they are more easily influenced into engaging in violent behavior. In nearly all of these struggles, though, the growing proliferation of small, lightweight weapons has enabled the phenomenon of child soldiers, making them effective combatants, and thus perpetuating civil wars and humanitarian crises worldwide.

Since 1989, a turning point for the Cold War as Presidents Bush and Gorbachev signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty to end the conflict between the US and the Soviet Union, more than 500 million small arms and light weapons have been made widely available throughout the developing world.² Mark Duffield, a scholar of International Relations and Politics at the University of Lancaster in Britain, states that in the early 1990s when the Cold War fighting stopped, "millions of weapons were declared surplus and instead of being destroyed, were dumped into the world market at a fraction of their original cost."³ Rifles, pistols, and grenades—all weapons that are easy to operate and involve little maintenance—flowed into the poorest of countries. Their high levels of accessibility provided the inexpensive means for waging war, and their proliferation has caused instability and state failure as they become immersed in years of brutal conflict. The surge in the supply of small arms throughout failed and failing states has facilitated a dramatic increase in the use of children in conflict situations.

As Graça Machel, the UN's expert on children and war, asserts, "hand grenades, handguns, and AK-47 rifles can be used by small children with deadly effect." These weapons, she believes, allowed for the "obscene transformation of hundreds of thousands of children into professionalized killers."⁴ The mixture of small arms and small soldiers has led to eternal cycles of violence, and caused entire generations of children to be engulfed in the dangers of war.

The cases of Colombia, Myanmar, Uganda, and the Balkans legitimize the argument that small arms proliferation has played a sizeable role in the use of children in conflicts throughout the world. All four states within the past twenty years have been flooded with small arms stockpiles and suffered violent insurgencies. Additionally, within these conflicts the rebel forces and government militaries maintain some of the highest recorded numbers of child soldiers.

Therefore, the positive correlations between the rates of arms supply and child soldier use, as suggested by these examples, indicates a need for improved international regulation of small weapons transfers. As well, they show the need for a crucial expansion in more universal protection of children's rights. As many scholars and humanitarian groups confirm, if the international community addresses the relationship between these issues, peacebuilding initiatives can become more effective.

The Nature of Small Arms Proliferation

According to the Small Arms Survey, a research project at The Graduate Institute in Geneva, the value of the illegal arms trade (referring to the black market and stolen military stock) is in upwards of \$10 billion annually, while legal international small arms transfers falls between \$4 and 6 billion.⁵ Accounting for both the new production of arms and the recycling of old stockpiles, these numbers demonstrate the size of the arms trade. Furthermore, because the arms are produced by large, private suppliers in developed nations and then transferred to developing societies with lax weapons regulations, countries like the US play a large role in fostering cultures of violence in poor areas.⁶ Machel, in her study on children in war notes that, "increasingly, both governments and manufacturers are working through private dealers who will sell arms to anyone- and are accountable to no one." Private arms industries, she states, "often circumvent laws to supply arms to and through illegal organized crime groups."⁷ Demonstrated by global figures which report that over 700 private companies produce arms today, these numbers clearly represent the large amount of first world industrial profits gained from third world conflicts.

Fueled by technology advances in developed nations, too, small arms have become even cheaper and are the most favored weapons of war. As the flow of transfers is constant, now people in the world's most struggling states can access better, privately-manufactured weapons. And, in many countries, the inexpensive nature of the trade has led to an unfortunate fluctuation of national priorities. Recent reports show that Burundi, an African nation very much affected by poverty and violence, spends over 6 percent of its GDP on armaments, while it spends only 4 percent on education, and just one percent on healthcare programs.⁸ In other nations, it is common for families to trade in bags of food for weapons. As one study on the conflict in Northern Uganda cites, black market gun dealers, private brokers, and even members of military will exchange an AK-47 or pistol for maize or sorghum.⁹ In nations such as these, the proliferation of small arms penetrates society to such a degree where individual arms-building is a greater concern than education, health, and even food.

In his study on state failure and small arms diffusion, Michael T. Klare, a professor and director of the Five College Program in Peace and World Security Studies, states that the arms trade and its accessibility in troubled nations, "sustains conflicts, exacerbates violence, contributes to the

displacement of civilians, undermines respect for international humanitarian law, and fuels crime and terrorism.”¹⁰ The circulation of old stockpiles and new supplies, Klare believes, “greatly contributes to the emergence and destructive impact of armed bands” in situations of failed states.¹¹ Throughout many developing nations where fractured governments and strong rebel forces collide, the constant presence of small weapons has legitimized violence and established traditions of conflict.¹² Moreover, as many scholars argue, the prevalence of unregulated small arms transfers has directly influenced the gross abuses of human rights over the past few decades.

Conflict Cultures and Marginalized Youth

It is estimated that about two million child casualties occurred during the several armed conflicts of the 1990s, and studies from the UN and Red Cross say that small arms are responsible for about 90 percent of these deaths.¹³ In countries where child soldiers are heavily utilized, boys and girls as young as five are the perpetrators of these atrocities, too. Thus, there is clearly a direct correlation between small arms violence and the suffering of young generations.

These figures, though, do not demonstrate the magnitude of youth involvement in combat efforts, nor do they take into consideration the effects of small-arms violence on children’s psychological welfare. In her report on the human rights perspective of small arms, Susan Waltz, an international policy scholar at the University of Michigan, qualifies the era from the late 1980s to present day as one where the “ubiquitous AK-47 was as readily slung over the shoulder of a fourteen-year-old boy as a forty-year old man.”¹⁴ The simple technology and structure of weapons like the Russian-made rifle, sub-machine guns, revolvers, and mines have given children practical tools of war. As the senior analyst for the Center for Defense Information, Rachel Stohl suggests in her report on the arms trade targeting of children, “the presence and proliferation of small weapons has made child combatants just as effective as adults, and has to a large extent, erased distinctions between child and adult combatants.”¹⁵ Additionally, because of the onset of automatic weapons, there is little difference between the amount of damage adults soldiers inflict as opposed to children, because with the pull of the trigger, some guns can fire a burst of up to thirty rounds. In this regard, even the smallest of children armed

with light weapons have the ability to cause large-scale destruction.

Beyond the obvious impacts of deadly arms, violent insurgencies also deteriorate education structures and cause high levels of displacement among youth. Using the example of North Kivu, a notoriously violent region of the Congo, Stohl cites the widespread problem of abductions. The Congolese Rally for Democracy-Goma and the Rwandan Patriotic Army raid schoolhouses and systematically kidnap or coerce the children into fighting against the government of Congo.¹⁶ "Schools may not function," Stohl says, "due to rampant instability or because parents and teachers fear that the children will be abducted."¹⁷ The abduction method, an underlying problem in most divided African nations, has led many to flee their homes, too, heading to refugee or displacement camps to escape rebel and government forces. It is believed that more than 13 million refugees and over 23 million internally displaced persons endure today's conflicts. As stated by a report from Oxfam, "they are motivated by the fear that people with guns will use them on vulnerable communities."¹⁸ As entire populations are constantly exposed to the weapons, then, young minds are programmed to think only about defense, protection, and survival.

Many times overlooked, the dangers humanitarian aid workers face is also an issue caused by the arms proliferation. Between 1992 and 2001, more than 200 national and international UN workers lost their lives to small arms violence.¹⁹ And, as displacement and refugee camps are overcrowded, it is difficult to keep small weapons out of aid stations trying to help children. In a response to this, the UN has removed most of its personnel from vulnerable situations.²⁰ Because the international community rests hope on these workers to help stabilize insurgencies and rehabilitate brutalized children, when violence forces them to leave, the process of child reintegration greatly suffers.

Thus, proven as a main tool of human rights abuses and conflict proliferation the effect of small arms on children is undoubtedly far-reaching.

Small Arms, Guerrillas, and Paramilitaries: The Case of Colombia

Starting in the late 1970s when violent drug cartels gained power and insurgent groups formed in opposition to social and political issues, Colombia has been in a state of unrest. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army, (ELN) continue to operate a communist movement through guerilla force against the

Colombian government. And, according to Peter Warren Singer, author of *Children at War*, the Colombian civil war currently employs approximately 11,000 child soldiers, fighting on all sides.²¹ In a basic overview of the numbers, it is believed that about 30 percent of FARC units are made up of children, and up to 85 percent of the some paramilitary groups like the United Self-Defense Forces (AUC) are children. The majority of these fighters are under the age of fifteen, with the youngest recorded soldier to be just seven years old.²² Most troubling, though, is the rate at which these young troops inflict harm. In a report produced by Colombia's National Department of Statistics, 18 percent of children fighting in the conflict admitted to killing at least once, and more than 40 percent said they had wounded someone.²³

It is believed that many of the young followers in the Colombian conflict are homeless and join both the paramilitaries and guerilla forces out of basic necessity. Many times, though, they are recruited against their will or born into the insurgency, and manipulated into participating in risky missions.²⁴

Unique to Colombia's armed insurgent forces, however, is the high level of discipline and uniformity to which the units of child fighters are indoctrinated. Children of the FARC, especially, are highly proficient in organized combat, and are typically referred to as "little bees" because they "sting before the enemies know they're under attack," as Singer notes in his study.²⁵ It is believed, though, that because the paramilitaries and guerillas have access to large amounts of cash from the drug trade, their forces can attain good weapons on the black market. Additionally, weapons which the US and other states provided to various groups in Central American civil wars during the 1980s have trickled down into the hands of FARC, ELN, and AUC fighters.²⁶ This constant and significant supply of small weapons, many note, has allowed for more and more children to be armed in the conflict. The quality of their small weapons and training, too, has made young Colombians expert killers.

A Government's Mobilization of Children: The Case of Myanmar

Though the foremost arms suppliers in the US and the European Union no longer provide Myanmar with arms because of its atrocious human rights records and recent violent protests, China, India and North Korea still supply the Asian nation with a steady flow of weapons. A researcher for

the Arms Transfers Project of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Siemon Wezeman cites that "together, these countries can supply anything Burma could possibly want, and they have done so in the past fifteen years."²⁷ Other reports from the Project show that legal arms transfers, alone, to Myanmar valued more than \$2 billion between 1988, when the junta first crushed a pro-democracy uprising, and 2006.²⁸ Such a flood of armaments to Myanmar has helped its army become the second largest in all of Southeast Asia, after Vietnam.

What is most troubling about the nation's surge in armed forces, though, is the simultaneous swell in employment of child soldiers. Currently, over 75,000 children serve among the national army ranks and various rebel groups throughout Myanmar, as reported by Human Rights Watch.²⁹ Staggering reports estimate that 45 percent of the national army is under the age of eighteen, with one-quarter of them younger than fifteen years. Humanitarian workers like Jo Becker, the advocacy director for the Children's Rights Division at the Human Rights Watch, have said that "Burma has a poor human rights record, but its record on child soldiers is the worst in the world."³⁰ A culture of fear has so greatly penetrated generations of young children in the nation, to a point where it is believed that "to be a boy in Burma today means facing the constant risk of being picked up off the street, forced to commit violent atrocities against villagers, and never seeing your family again."³¹

Mixed with the reluctance of national officials to recognize the use of child soldiers much less the widespread human rights abuses within the past two decades, the armed conflict in Myanmar surely demonstrates the effects of an unregulated flow of arms. And, while there are no reports on the number of illegal arms transfers in the country, it is expected that the situation is even worse than studies have shown.

Illicit Arms and Displacement of Children: The Case of Uganda

There is perhaps no greater, longer lasting conflict impacting children today, than the one caused by the Lord's Resistance Army's rebellion against the Ugandan government. According to Amnesty International, the region of Northern Uganda, since 1987, has witnessed the greatest atrocities to the rights of children. "The LRA targets children, kidnapping thousands of them and often forcing them to become child soldiers, temporary porters, or sexual concubines for officers," the human rights group

confirms.³² It is estimated that nearly 80 percent of the entire LRA force is made up of children, including the world's youngest reported combatant, age five.³³ Furthermore, as most of these children are abducted, with some small regions like the Kitgum district reporting that between 1990 and 2000, the LRA kidnapped or killed more than 4,000 children, the conflict has led to the displacement of one-half of the Northern Ugandan population.³⁴ Fleeing in fear, the number of internally displaced people not only represents the direct impacts of the violent conflict, but also demonstrates just how deteriorated Ugandan society has become.

Because of its unstable nature, the government in Uganda has virtually no way to determine the statistics of the ongoing armed conflict. Consequently, the state cannot enforce any regulations on the arms proliferation affecting the violence either. However, calculating death tolls from the northern region's hospitals, where 60 percent of fatalities are reportedly caused by gun shot wounds, it is clear that small arms cause much of the problem.³⁵ When Oxfam, a group of humanitarian NGOs, conducted a survey of key informants (mostly youths) throughout the region, it found that the LRA operates primarily with AK-47s, G3 rifles, pistols, SLR rifles, light machine guns, Chinese rifles, WWII-era Mark 4's, and submachine guns.³⁶ It is believed that the LRA and other small insurgents gain almost all of these weapons from illegal trading, bribes, and the black market existing on the Uganda-Sudan border. A Community-Based Service Officer in the northern district of Kotido, Sambey Logira, told Oxfam researchers that along the border, arms dealers operate a large market selling high-powered assault rifles, pistols, and ammunition.³⁷ Of course, these weapons are mostly attained by the Sudanese people through the flow of Cold War stocks being cleared out of European nations.

Considering that children make-up the bulk of Ugandan rebel forces that acquire the masses of illegal weapons, poses a crucial dilemma. When there exists such a widely-accessible stock of weapons, all individuals in society start becoming desensitized to their presence. When young children are constantly exposed to the guns, though, they become programmed to believe that being armed is necessary for survival. Thus, a serious problem faces the community when children escape the insurgency or are demobilized, as the Center for Defense Information's Stohl acknowledges, because though they may want to flee the conflict, children are many times unwilling to surrender the weapons which kept them alive.³⁸ Human rights

groups emphasize that reintegration and demobilization programs are the best potential solutions to relieve child soldiers. So when their effectiveness is hindered by the proliferation of small arms, it is clear that the programs need to increase the scope of their rehabilitation, perhaps to include frameworks for a mandated collection of children's weapons.

Young Volunteers in Armed Opposition: The Case of the Balkans

Due to the severity of human rights abuses they cause, the conflicts in Latin America, Asia, and Africa dominate the discussion of child soldiers and the impact of small arms trade. However, it is also important to take into account the child soldiers of Europe, where underage individuals have voluntarily joined violent conflict in recent years.

Enduring a period of liberation movements and violent upheavals throughout most of the 1990s, the Balkans region witnessed the severe impact of war on children. With much of the continent still possessing a great deal of Soviet-made small arms stockpiles, when conflicts arose throughout Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo there was a fair supply of weapons with which to fight.³⁹ And, when individuals throughout the nations took up arms to fight in the ethnic hostilities and national resistances, violence began permeating everyday life. One Bosnian child fighter, Narcis Misanovic, eleven years old when he joined the army to defend Sarajevo recalls that in his hometown of Dobrinja, his neighborhood was "under siege, without food, without water, without gas, and without the possibility of leading a normal life."⁴⁰ Because society became fractured and quality of life deteriorated, many young people like Misanovic actually volunteered to serve. "As a child, I did not find service difficult," he adds. "It was rather a positive thing. I understood these people had the same goal, which was to live together."⁴¹

The situation this young boy faced was quite common throughout the region during the 1990s. Despite the fact that national laws did not even allow them to take up arms, children made up much of the force of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), the Albanian National Liberation Army, and the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja, and Bujanovac. In some of the conflicts, like Croatia's Homeland War, thousands of young boys willingly left their families to fight.⁴²

Tragically, due to the conflicts' general lack of organized combat, many of the young soldiers in these areas lost their lives. As Singer reported in

his book, "Commanders saw children as expendable resources whose losses do not destroy and may even benefit the cause." One KLA officer, citing the calamity of the Army's crossing into Albania in which almost three-quarters of the young recruits died, teenage fighters were treated as "cannon-fodder." Other reports say that the underage soldiers in Kosovo and Albanian combat situations could rarely survive longer than two days.⁴³

Recognizing that the widely-accessible stockpile of small arms led ethnic tensions to escalate into violent civil conflicts during the 1990s, most of the nations have since developed programs to collect and destroy the guns.⁴⁴ It is believed that most Balkan societies, in the past few years, have experienced a decrease in hostilities due to this disarmament.

Attempted Policy: International Conventions on Arms and Children

Clearly demonstrated by the reforms initiated in the Balkans, aid programs in Uganda, US arms embargoes directed at Myanmar, and proposed weapons reduction in Colombia, the problem of arms proliferation and child soldiers is not overlooked. Since the onset of these violent conflicts, officials worldwide have tried to stem the issue. However, international policy is typically non-binding and national plans are not strong enough to combat the global dilemmas. Thus, attempts to improve regulation on arms and protect rights of children have fallen short.

In 1992 the UN General Assembly adopted a policy to ensure more transparency in global arms transfers. The UN Register of Conventional Arms, though effective in monitoring the flow of large-scale military armaments like tanks and missiles, does not track the trade of small arms, nor does it mandate member states to submit arms information. It is widely believed that if such a report were to include small arms and light weapons—the main tools of war today—UN peacekeeping missions could gain more accurate information about small arms. Additionally, as a study on the 1994 Rwandan genocide suggests, if the UN had known the degree to which small arms were flowing into conflict, they could have helped to curb the violence.⁴⁵ Furthermore, as Aaron Karp, a former director of the Arms Transfer Project suggests, if the scope of the Register was expanded to include small weapons, it could help to "strengthen national legislation to cut illicit arms trafficking," and would provide a clearer definition of small arms needed to frame enforcement procedures.⁴⁶

In 2001, because the problem of small arms was not covered in the

Register, the UN attempted to address the issue with an international summit. The Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects called nations together to agree on an international ban on the private ownership of "assault rifles, grenade launchers, and similar weapons intended for military use," as noted by a congressional report.⁴⁷ However, because it interfered with the freedoms granted by domestic arms policy, the Bush administration and the Republican Party base vehemently opposed the ban. Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs, John Bolton represented the US at the convention, and announced that it would not "join consensus on a final document that contains measures contrary to our constitutional right to keep and bear arms."⁴⁸ And, when UN officials during the convention began discussing the potential of banning arms sales to insurgent groups, Bolton dissented again. Contesting the efforts of African leaders who wanted to stop the flow of weapons to the guerillas causing violent conflicts in their countries, the US insisted its right to help groups defending themselves from genocidal governments.⁴⁹ As a result of these debates, the conference achieved virtually nothing in terms of policy change and instituted no new regulation procedures for the proliferating arms trade.

As a result of eternally lax standards on illicit arms transfers, the effort to eliminate the use of child soldiers throughout the world's small-arms-based conflicts has not experienced any great success either. While the UN's 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child established the first discussions on the issue of child soldiers, it has created little progress.⁵⁰ The resolution called for a ban on using individuals under age eighteen in conflict, which the member states supported. However, it also called for international reform of other issues, like capital punishment and reproductive rights, as it sought to prohibit the execution of individuals who committed crimes under the age of eighteen, and expand abortion rights to minors.⁵¹ Although, unlike the endeavors to limit small arms, this treaty is legally binding, many conflicts in the signatory nations still employ child soldiers. More importantly, as the US never ratified it due to the contradiction of domestic policies, the CRC did not succeed in gaining the international stature it intended.

The continuance of children's rights abuses alongside the surge in dangerous conflicts fueled by the small arms trade, then, reveals the inadequacy of current international policy.

Potential Solutions

In examining states of crises where rising supplies of small arms correlate to growing concerns over child soldiers, and in interpreting existing treaties which target the violence, it is clear that certain areas of world policy can potentially be more strongly developed.

First, it must be universally understood that the small arms trade will never be completely regulated, and certainly never eliminated. Many nations, after all, do have rights similar to the US second amendment, allowing for the individual, private ownership of guns. Likewise, many countries must rely on foreign suppliers of small arms to build legitimate police and military forces. The primary concern lay not in these legal acquisitions, but rather, in the illegal small arms trade, which is valued at twice that of the legal market.⁵² Thus, international strategy to control the arms trade should be less concerned with limitations on private ownership, but rather direct its efforts to reduce the amount of illicit arms transfers. And while it is difficult to trace the flow of old stockpiled arms, international authorities like the UN could possibly limit the amount of the new supply making it into the black market by forcing arms-makers to properly number or mark each weapon with a serial number so that shipments and individual arms can be traced. This also necessitates the need for the UN Register on Conventional Arms to open its report to cover small arms and light weapons.⁵³

In responding to the unrestrained legal arms trade, though, there is also room for improvement. As Richard Grimmet, the International Security Specialist in the Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade Division of the Congressional Research Service outlines in his 2007 report on arms transfers, efforts need to be made, especially in the US, to “strengthen export procedures in order to improve accountability,” in the legal trade.⁵⁴ After the US puts standards in place to make itself and its private arms producers more accountable for the transfer of weapons, it can be assumed that arms possession laws will be more stringent. And, ultimately, when possession laws are better enforced, the state of the global arms supply can be better monitored, which is vital to restricting the proliferation.

In her study for “Arms Control Failure and the Balance of Power,” Julian Schofield, a political science scholar from Montreal’s Concordia University, notes a survey of arms control treaties between 1815 and 1987 which shows that generally, “agreements designed specifically to avert

impending wars by containing their conflict spirals were more effective than those sought to preserve general peace."⁵⁵ Thus, it is practical to suggest that if the UN monitored small arms conflicts more closely, it could develop specialized policies to respond to the issues before they got worse, instead of just operating under broad peace-promoting plans. In other words, if the UN had ground stations along the Sudan-Uganda border, it would have better understood the illicit arms problem earlier, and could have put checkpoints in place to stem the severity of the conflict. Granted, this is an oversimplified example but the underlying concept of early detection is important to consider.

Lastly, in addressing the issue of the recycled Cold War weapons stockpiles, it is recommended that national governments begin programs with the goal of arms destruction. As in the cases of Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosovo, where peace-building and crime prevention initiatives collected and destroyed over 12 million rounds of small arms ammunition, 60,000 grenades, and over 30,000 guns, such programs have proven successful.⁵⁶ It is believed that if nations like Colombia destroyed the stockpiles of weapons fueling rebel groups such as the FARC, the accessibility to a weapons supply in prolonged conflicts would diminish.

In responding to the relationship between weapons control and children's rights, when governments hold public arms-destruction events it suggests that the state does not approve of the culture of violence. If children watch the burning of armament stockpiles, it is expected that they will develop the perception that weapons are forbidden. Reports from July of 2002, when the governments of South Africa, Thailand, Brazil, and Cambodia held public destruction events, suggest that this method of arms control is highly favorable by citizens of war-torn areas.⁵⁷

Additionally, all programs directed at helping rehabilitate child soldiers must also address the process of disarmament. Initiatives, like UNICEF's youth programs in Kosovo, Somalia, and Southern Sudan, which collect information from youths pertaining to their knowledge of weapons and violence, have shown great success in changing children's attitudes toward violence.⁵⁸ In nations like Uganda, where children who have escaped the war but still feel the need to carry weapons, there is clearly a need for youth disarmament and peace awareness programs such as these.

Furthermore, as the International Criminal Court in January 2009 recently brought a child soldier exploitation case to trial for the first time

in the history of its institution, the prosecution of human rights abuses regarding children is finally entering the global spotlight. The trial of former Congolese Patriots militia leader, Thomas Lubanga, charged with enlisting children under the age of fifteen in the brutal conflict, shows that the international community is paying more attention to the violations of children's rights.⁵⁹ Ultimately, though, knowing there are hundreds more cases like Lubanga's, in which powerful leaders exploit children, demonstrates the increased need for human rights groups and international agencies to bring these criminals to justice. It can be expected that if the employment of child soldiers is treated as a war crime, and punished, the widespread use of children in conflict will diminish.

In making these brief policy recommendations, though, it is assumed that progress in the reduction of small arms and the protection of children will only be advanced if human rights as a whole are better upheld in the global community. Effective arms control and respect for the rights of the child cannot be forced upon states by any international body. These ideas of peace-building must penetrate individual societies and their governments in order for the world to suppress widespread cultures of violence.

Small Arms, Small Soldiers: The Final Analysis

While it is hopeful that potential disarmament policies will result in fewer violent conflicts, and consequentially, a more fair treatment of children around the world, many scholars believe that the scale of the problem is too large to combat in today's international political community.⁶⁰ Noted as an era of "militarized daily life" for numerous cultures around the world, during the past twenty years the world has witnessed an unparalleled wave of humanitarian crises stemming from the proliferation of easily-accessible small arms.

These crises, however, as shown by certain demobilization and reintegration programs, can be alleviated if human rights groups, international political bodies, non-governmental organizations, and stable powers like the US recognize the severity of the issues and collaborate on improving policy worldwide.

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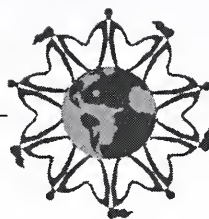
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Eradicating Female Genital Mutilation

A Plan for Action

FRANCES NOBES

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM) has been prevalent across the world for centuries.¹ While it is considered by many to be a blatant and disgusting violation of basic human rights, others argue that female circumcision is an integral cultural entity within certain societies and should, therefore, not be regulated or prevented. However, Nussbaum argues that, "we should be ashamed of ourselves if we do not use whatever privilege and power that has come our way to make it disappear forever."² There have been previous efforts to eradicate the practice of female genital mutilation; 15 African countries have passed legislation specifically banning the practice and other nations around the world are under pressure from both domestic and international sources to pass laws which would make the practice illegal and a human rights violation. This is crucial as female genital mutilation was officially considered to be an act of violence against women in September 2001 when, "USAID adopted an 'official policy regarding female genital cutting...that recognises that FGC as a harmful traditional practice that violates the health *and* human rights of women (USAID, 2004).'"³ Yet despite this, the number of women and girls subjected to this procedure remains high. This paper will firstly describe a background to female genital cutting and why it is practiced. It

will then analyse previous difficulties faced by policymakers and how these problems need to be addressed before making further policy decisions. Finally, the last section of this paper will provide policy recommendations for the future.

The main focus of this paper will be on international organizations, specifically the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Human Rights High Commissioner, UNICEF and UNIFEM. I have chosen these specific organizations primarily because the larger organizations of WHO and the High Commissioner have significant financial and political resources at their disposal. However, UNIFEM and UNICEF have a more specialised link to the practice of FGM as it directly affects women and children. These four groups provide a broad range of interests that show concern for female genital cutting; as a medical issue, a human rights issue, a display of violence against women and a violation of the rights of children. While non-governmental organizations have been involved with the attempt to eradicate FGM, this paper targets international governmental institutions, as there is a need for the international system to actively support this campaign.

An Examination Of Female Genital Mutilation

There are four different types of female genital mutilation. WHO defines female genital mutilation as, "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons."⁴ Type I is defined as *Clitoridectomy*, where "part or the whole of the clitoris is amputated and the bleeding is stopped by pressure or a stitch."⁵ Type II is defined as *excision*, where the clitoris and the inner lips (labia minora) are removed. Type III is *infibulations*, where (usually) the clitoris is removed, some or all of the labia minora are removed and the narrowing of the vaginal opening by cutting and repositioning the inner, and sometimes outer, labia. This creates a hood of scar tissue which acts as a hood covering the urethra and most of the vagina. Type IV is the category of 'other': this includes "all other unclassified procedures, including pricking...piercing and stretching [of the labia]."⁶

Female genital mutilation is not a new phenomenon. The practice may have begun as early as the year 25 BC in the Nile Valley.⁷ However, FGM has only become an international concern in the past few decades.

According to research, "female circumcision is currently practiced in at least 28 countries stretching across the center of Africa."⁸ The countries with the highest rates of female genital mutilation include Somalia, Mali and Sudan. While this issue is most prevalent in African and some Middle Eastern countries, the practice is present in economically developed countries such as the United States. In the UK alone, "almost 66,000 females in England and Wales were affected by FGM and thousands of children and young people were at risk."⁹ While these are reported on a much smaller scale it is important to recognise that this procedure is performed on women and girls worldwide.

Traditionally, girls are subjected to the procedure either during puberty or before a marriage ceremony (which is often soon after puberty). Some scholars place the age of cutting between four and twelve years old,¹⁰ however in reality the age limits are more likely to be between four and seven.¹¹ There is no exact age at which girls undergo female genital cutting, although the average age does appear to be decreasing. The WHO estimates that between 100 and 140 million girls and women worldwide have been subjected to one of the first three types of female genital mutilation. 91.5 million women and girls in Africa over the age of 9 are living with the consequences of female genital mutilation.¹² In Africa more than 6,000 girls undergo female genital cutting every day.¹³ In terms of percentages of female populations; 98 percent of the women in Somalia, 93 percent in Mali, 89 percent in Sudan and 43 percent in the Central African Republic have suffered female genital mutilation.

There are two main reasons why women and girls are forced to undergo the process of female genital mutilation. The first is religion. The number of women subjected to FGM is significantly higher in Muslim societies. For many, it is considered to be an essential practice of Islam. The exception to this is Saudi Arabia; this country is the 'cradle of Islam' and yet female genital cutting is not practiced, which leads one to question how deeply rooted the practice is within Islamic culture and religion. According to studies carried out in Sudan, Muslim women are not only more likely to be circumcised than Christian women, but they are also more likely to support the practice of circumcision citing that it is a "religious demand."¹⁴ This is not the case - far from it. On many occasions, "Muslim theologians state[d] that there is no explicit support for the practice in the Koran."¹⁵ In October 1994, the mufti of Egypt, Shaykh Muhammed Sayyid Tantawi,

publicly announced that the Qur'an does not promote or require female genital mutilation to be performed, arguing that, "the hadith (reported sayings) attributed to the Prophet were unreliable and that there was no evidence to suggest that the Prophet had ordered his own daughters to undergo any type of FGC."¹⁶ Therefore, it is considerably more likely that female genital mutilation is a tradition which has been incorporated into the Muslim societies rather than an integral part of the faith. Gruenbaum argues that, "Circumcision...was successfully incorporated into the Sudanese Islamic belief system. The practice is deeply embedded in Sudanese cultures."¹⁷

The second, and arguably more important, reason is its meaning and traditional value within societies. Nussbaum argues that female genital cutting is, "unambiguously linked to the customs of male domination"¹⁸ while WHO maintain that it is, "a manifestation of gender inequality."¹⁹ Linked to this is the idea that FGM, especially infibulation, will enhance sexual pleasure for the male²⁰ as "the enhancement of a woman's ability to please her husband is considered to be most importantly achieved by clitoridectomy and infibulation."²¹ Female genital mutilation is also performed to control female sexuality. Althaus argues that FGM is performed in societies, "where patriarchal authority and control of female sexuality... are given."²² Not only is female genital mutilation seen as a cure for lesbianism and desires to masturbate, but it is believed that clitoridectomy and excision will, "attenuate a woman's desire for sexual intercourse, while infibulation is an attempt to make sexual intercourse physically impossible for a woman."²³ The practice is an attempt to reduce the sexual desires of women, although in the case of clitoridectomy and excision it is possible to have sensation within the vaginal passage and experience sexual pleasure during intercourse. However, this is only the case if there has been no severe infection or damage to the vagina. Therefore, this is not only an irrational reason for legitimising the practice of female genital mutilation, but it is an ineffective one.

It is also believed that FGM preserves purity in girls. The societies which practice female genital cutting are often concerned with, "traditional beliefs about women's purity."²⁴ It is believed that by curbing the sexual desires and abilities of girls that they will remain chaste and pure. This is not only important to family members and societal values of, "the importance of virginity and its relation to the maintenance of family

'honor',²⁵ but more specifically it will lead to better marriage prospects. There is an expectation that men will only marry women who have undergone female genital cutting,²⁶ thus in order to marry into more prosperous and wealthier families, women are subjected to female genital cutting. For example, in Man (interior of Côte d'Ivoire), "a Yacouba girl who has not been circumcised is not considered marriageable."²⁷ The majority of women in the Juba region of Sudan cite "better marriage prospects" as the main reason for their support of female genital mutilation.²⁸ Virginity and fidelity are believed to be safeguarded by the practice, as well as increasing fertility which is another important factor when considering marriage. Similarly, if premarital virtue and marital fidelity are ensured by female genital cutting then, "where a person's place in society is determined by lineage traced through fathers, female circumcision reduces the uncertainty surrounding paternity."²⁹

Female genital cutting is used as a coming of age ritual or rite of passage to, "raise a girl properly and to prepare her for adulthood and marriage."³⁰ However, this goes against the evidence showing the mean age for FGM is decreasing and is currently significantly younger than puberty. Perhaps the most common and problematic reason why the practice has continued and even increased is the idea that female genital mutilation is a tradition to be upheld. In Sudan, "social custom and tradition are the most prominent reasons given"³¹ for supporting the practice. One Sudanese writer explains the practice as being, "something we inherited from an untraceable past which has no rational meaning and lies within the realm of untouchable sensitivity of traditional people."³² It can be easily argued that certain societies see female genital mutilation as, "an integral part of their cultural and ethnic identity,"³³ which makes it all the more difficult to argue the rational and logical disadvantages of the practice.

FGM as a Violation of Human Rights

Female genital mutilation violates the right to health and bodily integrity. This is spelled out in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that, "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family."³⁴ Unlike male circumcision, female genital cutting has no known medical benefits. The procedure is solely detrimental. In the short term the woman suffers severe blood loss, possible haemorrhaging and there is an extremely

high likelihood of infection.³⁵ Operations are often performed in unsanitary conditions using equipment which is unsterilized and are frequently not medical implements. Furthermore, many of the people performing the practice are not medically trained.³⁶ Long term problems include chronic infection, urination problems,³⁷ infertility, menstruation difficulties and severe pain and difficulty during sexual intercourse and childbirth.³⁸ Problems during childbirth lead to a higher rate of infant mortality.³⁹ However, when comparing risk factors in pregnancy on a global level, female genital mutilation is placed somewhere behind maternal smoking.⁴⁰ Female genital cutting is also associated with terrible psychological trauma including severe anxiety before the procedure and a frightening and distressing experience during the operation. The procedure is incredibly painful and no anaesthetic is used, so girls are frequently held down by several other women as they are mutilated, often against their will. Similarly, women often experience terrible pain and psychological distress during sexual intercourse.⁴¹

Female genital mutilation also violates the rights of the child as it is almost always performed on minors and without their consent. This clearly violates the rights of the child outlined in the Articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,⁴² and some have also criticised the practice as, "a ritualised form of child abuse."⁴³ However, some have argued that female genital mutilation is carried out by parents in the best interests of their child. Shell-Duncan proposes that, "Parents, who value the cultural, economic, and social benefits of the practice may view genital cutting as being in the best interest of the child's mental, moral, and spiritual development yet would be classified as 'incompetent and abusive mothers [and fathers].'"⁴⁴ Article 5 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that,

States Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents ...extended family or community as provided for by local custom ... to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the present Convention.⁴⁵

In this way, one could argue that female genital mutilation is performed in the best interests of the child. However, this is not a valid reason to condone the practice

Female genital cutting also violates the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment as outlined in Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁴⁶ Article 1 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment defines torture as, "any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person."⁴⁷ One must not consider female genital mutilation to be a medical procedure, as Slack emphasises:

When a young girl is infibulated, on a dirty mat by a nonmedical woman with an old razor, then sewn up with acacia thorns, all without the use of anaesthesia, this should be considered a form of torture and a human rights violation⁴⁸

Similarly, girls are routinely held down to prevent them from escaping, and the use of an old razor would be a blessing, as some girls are cut using pieces of glass. Few women who perform the procedure sterilize their equipment or have medical training. This is not only a cause for grave concern, but also demonstrates how this can be considered a form of torture.

Female genital mutilation can also be seen to violate the basic human right of the right to life outlined in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁴⁹ Female genital cutting not only causes excessive pain and long-term health problems but many women die either shortly after the procedure or from health problems caused by the mutilation, such as severe infections. As discussed previously, female genital mutilation serves no beneficial purpose to the woman's health, and so can only be seen as a procedure which puts women's lives at risk.

Previous Efforts to Eradicate Female Genital Mutilation

Eradication efforts have ranged from education campaigns to the passage of criminal domestic laws.⁵⁰ International and regional treaties have called for the elimination of FGM including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which was ratified with a few exceptions including the United States. Other treaties and consensus documents include the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the African Charter on Human Peoples' Rights and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women.⁵¹ The practice has

been condemned by the World Health Organization, the UN Commission on Human Rights, UNICEF, the World Medication Organization, Minority Rights Group International and Amnesty International.⁵² There have been conferences and committees held to discuss the issue including the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, and the Inter African Committee Against Harmful Traditional Practices (IAC). The IAC has also raised funds to support local opposition to the practice as well as initiating and supporting national committees in African countries where female genital mutilation is prevalent.⁵³ There have also been domestic attempts to reduce or eliminate FGM, as in 1946 the Sudanese Ministry of Health prohibited infibulation and in April 1958 Egypt passed a law which prohibited all forms of female genital cutting. Egypt also added education about female genital cutting and its dangers to the school curriculum, as well as showing television programmes which condemn the practice.⁵⁴

However, these past policies have had little success in reducing the number of women and girls subjected to FGM. In Egypt, despite the efforts mentioned, female genital cutting is still present. There are three main areas which need to be analysed when considering new policy recommendations; culture, enforcement and self-interest.

Culture can be both an opportunity and a barrier to change. Culture can create new opportunities by using the existing cultural structure to inform people of the detrimental effects of FGM. There is usually resistance present within the culture which, if nurtured, can grow into an effective and powerful opposition force. However, culture also creates significant obstacles to solving this issue. Firstly, social norms often prevent people from speaking out against such a practice. In the case of female genital cutting, mothers who may disapprove of the practice have no voice to speak out against the mutilation of their own daughters in a society which is fiercely patriarchal—it is ultimately the male who decides on such issues.⁵⁵ Similarly, it has been argued that culture is “an excuse for abuse”⁵⁶—a façade to obscure violence and abuse hidden under the auspices of its cultural necessity or tradition. For some this questions whether the international system and states should be concerned about saving a culture which has traditions and rituals which are potentially life-threatening and constitute torture. This is a polemic question; while the practices and rituals may not be condoned, it is insensitive and potentially dangerous to aim

to eliminate such culture. Societies and individuals should be able to build and live in whatever culture they like, and who is to say which are better than others. Attempting to reform culture can cause the population to rebel against those who seek to alter it. This is a backlash against outside intervention in what is essentially a national or personal issue. For example in Rufa'a in Sudan, an edict was announced that prohibited infibulations in 1946. While this was an admirable effort by British colonial forces stationed there, the people reacted by tearing down the government prison and releasing women who had been arrested for performing FGM.⁵⁷ If communities have a particularly strong reaction to outside powers attempting to alter and change their culture, which arguably they should, then it would not be surprising for an insensitively planned culture adaptation to meet with severe resistance and violence.

When considering culture one could claim that there is a, "privileging of Western, particularly American, perspectives"⁵⁸ on issues such as FGM. This has been the argument posed against intervention from Europe, the United States or international bodies considered to be Western creations such as the United Nations. Therefore, when dealing with any cultural issue, outside states and international regimes must be sensitive to understanding other cultures. Gruenbaum argues that, "to approach it [FGM] as an evil or pathological situation is to insult those who believe strongly in it and consider it a means of promoting cleanliness and purity, and is unlikely to foster consideration of change."⁵⁹ Understanding the cultural relevance of a given issue is crucial to being able to find a solution which is feasible. This is certainly the case for female genital cutting as, "female circumcision is a deeply rooted tradition...it cannot be eradicated unless the deeply felt beliefs of those who practice it are well understood and a culturally acceptable policy is adopted."⁶⁰

Enforcement is the most important factor when considering why previous policies failed and how new policies can be improved. Despite numerous domestic laws the practice still continues with no sign of decreasing and the main cause for this is lack of enforcement. Such laws and rulings are, "difficult to enforce, possibly due to the geographical expanse of the landscape as well as the secretive nature of the subject."⁶¹ Not only is it problematic to monitor and enforce laws, but it is difficult to create domestic laws themselves. In many societies public opinion favours FGM, and rulings can only be passed through bureaucratic means or proclamations

rather than attempting to draft legislation. It is often the case that policies regarding FGM changes frequently in order to pacify factions within society.⁶² This weakens the reputation of the legislation, as well as making the rulings difficult to enforce as there is confusion as to what the policy entails and less incentive to enforce the law correctly. Another obstacle is that it is frequently women who perform these procedures and must be punished in cultures and societies which are not culturally accustomed to legally punishing women.⁶³

Self-interest is also a cause for the failure of previous policies. Human rights issues should be addressed by outside states and international bodies on the basis that a common humanity binds all mankind together, furthered by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, it is often the case that states and institutions only become involved in human rights violations when there is an element of personal gain or the issue infringes upon them. An example of this would be USAID projects which, "ordinarily must be demonstrated to have some beneficial effect on US trade, US geopolitical strategies, or other US interests; beneficial effects on the people or the economies of the developing countries are desirable, but secondary."⁶⁴

Policy Recommendations

Before commencing with specific policy proposals for the eradication of FGM, it would be of service to make a few general observations. First, all policy recommendations which are suggested below will take time to process and become effective. When attempting to eradicate a process so engrained in a culture, "complete eradication of the practice is an unrealistic short-term objective."⁶⁵ Kassamali argues that, "the changes will occur at a rate that is acceptable to people involved in this process, which may not be the rate desired by outsiders; nonetheless, change will not occur any faster if there is coercion."⁶⁶ We must learn not to become frustrated by slow progress but understand that a change in policy regarding FGM is likely to come in generational waves. The policies created should be multi-sectoral and sustained. The policies suggested below cover different areas including education, health and socio-economic considerations. The policies should encompass a wide range of factors which lead to the practice in order to be most effective. One further aspect, which is recommended in the interagency statement published by WHO is, "the collective, coordinated

choice by a practicing group to abandon female genital mutilation should be made visible or explicit through a public pledge.⁶⁷ By holding these groups accountable they are more likely to uphold their decisions and aims. Finally, funding is essential in order to make most of these policies possible. As mentioned in the introduction to this paper, the reason why certain specific international bodies were chosen was due to their extensive resources. Therefore, it is crucial that this human rights issue is not only taken seriously in terms of policies but also with regard to funding.

While one may assume that an effective way of tackling the issue of FGM would be through domestic laws and rulings, this is rarely the case. As mentioned above there has been a general failure of national laws, especially with regards to enforcement and implementation. Similarly, corruption of national government and an unwillingness to act against public opinion means international organizations or local grassroots level groups are most effective at petitioning for the elimination of FGM. This can be seen as international pressure has driven the creation of national and international laws on FGM rather than domestic pressure from individuals. A vast majority of the domestic anti-female genital cutting laws were created during a short period of time—and as it is unlikely that so many states acquired a more compassionate or moral conscience during such a short period, it is more likely that international pressure was the cause for these laws. Heger Boyle and Preves argue this point, claiming that,

if citizen interests were driving laws, we would expect the timing of anti-FGC laws to coincide with specific intranational disputes. Viewed as a group, these laws would occur sporadically. If, alternatively, international forces had a greater effect on laws, many national laws would be passed within a short period of time as the international community brought its resources to bear against the practice of female genital cutting. 68

Therefore, one can establish that the most successful means of moving towards the eradication of female genital mutilation is through international bodies. However, one must consider whether these actions should be coercive or assimilative. Coercive actions would require a threat or means of compulsion for the states to act in a manner which would lead to the elimination of female genital cutting. This could be through economic

or aid sanctions if the country fails to meet targets reducing reduction FGM, or political consequences for those who do not comply, such as loss of influence on the international stage in other areas which concern them. Assimilative actions, on the other hand, occur through strategies which legitimize opposition to FGM without threatening the sovereignty of the nation as coercive actions do. Assimilative tactics include bringing nations to the negotiation table and involving them in the decision-making process, rather than imposing arbitrary decisions upon them. This is also linked to the source of the intervention. In previous cases, colonial powers have sought to stamp out FGM with little success. However, legitimate and internationally recognized bodies such as the United Nations may have more success as they are held accountable by the member states and there is a level of discussion and deliberation involved, which colonial powers failed to achieve. While both coercive and assimilative approaches have their advantages and disadvantages, there is a larger issue at stake. Intervention from without can be seen as culturally insensitive and an intrusion rather than an attempt potentially save thousands of lives. Shell-Duncan argues that, "the human rights movement has...become a rescue mission from outside."⁶⁹ As discussed previously, any policies which are recommended must be culturally sensitive and take into account the social context of the practice. While this is not justifying or condoning the practice, actions must be culturally aware or they risk instant rejection.

With all this in mind, we may now turn to the question of what can and must be done on the local and international level in order to bring about the eradication to female genital mutilation.

Local Level Recommendations

Gruenbaum observes that, "Wherever possible, indigenous women and women's organizations should be involved in all stages of the research, from formulation of the problem to development of policy."⁷⁰ Althaus expresses this most clearly through the words of an infibulated Somali woman, "If Somali women change, it will be change done by us, among us. When they order us to stop, tell us what we must do, it is offensive to the black person or the Muslim person who believes in circumcision. To advise if good, but not to order."⁷¹ This shows not only the dilemma faced by international actors but also the primacy of individuals at the grassroots level to encourage an anti-FGM movement from below.

The most important effort at the local level is education. The education provided should be on a number of areas including the concept of human rights. By educating people about human rights, they can understand that they and others have a right to be free from the kind of pain which female genital cutting brings. This in turn can be used to create social norms to uphold the rights of women and children, which would raise awareness for the human rights issues of FGM. The education should also include skills training to allow the people in the communities to create their own means of support and be able to provide for themselves and their families. This is linked to FGM because if a family can improve their economic position then there will be less pressure to marry well. Education would also encompass teaching members of the community problem solving abilities so that when international volunteers and providers on the ground begin to withdraw the community is able to sustain itself. The education should also include the health risks associated with the practice as well as the fact that it is not essential for the Muslim religion and women have a right to choose their fate. This touches on a deeper rooted problem of excessive patriarchy within such societies.

Who should this education be aimed at? The short answer is everyone. Girls and women should be made aware of the great and unnecessary danger of undergoing female genital mutilation. Medical attendants should be educated as to how these procedures are unnecessary and extraordinarily dangerous. They can be educated regarding how better to serve the needs of women, especially during childbirth. Medical practitioners should also be made aware of how to provide for women who have already undergone female genital mutilation and are suffering the effects of it. Simple antibiotics and medicines could help thousands of women before and after infection. Similarly, if doctors and medical assistants are educated on the issue and its dangers they are more likely to join resistance movements against the practice. This is key, as if those who perform the procedures can be swayed then the number of cases of FGM will inevitably decrease. Attendants could also be trained to act preventatively; women who usually assist in FGM could actively seek out those considering the procedure and dissuade them. Also, such individuals could look for warning signs of families who may be about to subject their daughters to the procedure by visiting families whose children are at the age when the procedure would be carried out. Similarly, new vocational training should be

provided for those who are no longer needed as the number of women and girls undergoing the procedure declines. These assistants should be trained in new, skilled professions to provide them with a means of income and offset any loss of earnings.

Crucially, the education must also be targeted towards boys and men in the community, as one can teach men that female genital cutting is not a necessary or desirable trait for their future wives. Many women believe it is necessary to undergo female genital mutilation in order to marry, if this myth were to be dispelled by men in the society then it would send a very powerful message and negate the procedure. By educating men in this way, they would also be less likely to perform the practice on their own daughters, which would further reduce the prevalence of the practice.

This education can be presented in a variety of ways. Using the mass media in countries where this is relevant, such as Egypt, is an effective way of creating awareness. Television and radio campaigns would create discussion on the issue of female genital mutilation and allow people to learn more about the topic and why it must be prevented. Personal contact is also helpful; using volunteers from the local area as well as from international bodies such as the United Nations to educate people is vital. Sending individuals into schools and communities means people have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the issues in more detail. In school specifically, the volunteers and members of the community can educate others through more interesting forms, such as music, drama and dance. By making the presentation of the information appealing, one can expect more attention to be paid to the issue and therefore, raise people's awareness.

There should also be an effort to increase women's empowerment. This is linked to teaching women trades and skills in order for them to improve their social standing. Allowing women to have a more appreciated and extensive role within a community means that not only will her personal satisfaction and sense of achievement improve, but women can also become more economically self-sufficient which would free them from the pressures of marrying into wealthy families. This in itself is valuable, but it means that fewer women and girls will be forced to undergo female genital mutilation as their livelihood does not depend on them marrying someone who would only accept a 'circumcised' wife. Gruenbaum argues that, "reducing women's dependence on marriage and motherhood as the only economically viable social roles could separate circumcision from

basic economic survival"⁷² which would weaken support for the practice. It is also argued that access to education and employment would enhance women's ability to act as a group and, "become more involved in shaping their own destiny"⁷³ in terms of economic and political power.

"Recommending alternative customs is necessary"⁷⁴ when attempting to eradicate female genital mutilation. While female genital mutilation is often cited as a crucial element of rituals, perhaps other symbolic rituals could be recommended. While the cultural independence of communities must be respected, it is also necessary to ensure that human rights are paramount within all societies. While female genital mutilation can be a sign of a progression to female puberty, there must be other more humane and painless ways to show this. Rites of passage could be demonstrated through symbolic cutting of the genitals, that is to say, gestures of cutting using non-sharp objects in order to make it appear that the girl is being cut. Or perhaps plucking, touching or wiping the skin around the vaginal passage to symbolise a cleansing process. In this way, the ritual may be preserved but with significantly less harm to the girls involved. Alternative rituals could be assumed such as providing the girls with keepsakes or giving them gifts for their future lives. However, the argument that female genital mutilation is used as a rite of passage into puberty and womanhood is somewhat questionable, as the age of female genital cutting is too young to be for such a purpose.

International Level Recommendations

Just as education is needed at the local level, awareness on the international stage is also critical. FGM is not a well-discussed issue at the international level for a variety of reasons. Many people do not know how widespread and prevalent the practice is across the world. Firstly, there may be a prudish element to its discussion, meaning the more intimate and disturbing details about the practice are not fully understood by people who know of the problem. Secondly, FGM is not considered one of the most crucial of human rights violations of our time. In a period where millions of people are starving or homeless every day, even in developed countries, there is a tendency to push the issue of female genital cutting to the background. However, it should not be necessary for only some human rights violations to be considered important. Human rights violations should necessarily all be of equal concern. Therefore, making this issue

paramount on the international scene as well as education people all over the world of its significance and is crucial in the fight to eliminate the practice. This includes holding more international, specifically United Nations, and regional committee talks in order to promote the cause and come to feasible solutions. This is essential in order to break through a sense of apathy regarding this issue. I would, therefore, recommend that sessions be called not only in the United Nations but by the European Union, the Africa Union and the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations in order to stimulate discussion and debate on this issue.

Although there have been laws made regarding the practice of FGM these have primarily been on a national rather than an international level. After the discussions mentioned above, I would recommend coming to a joint resolution with the members of the United Nations committing to a reduction in the number of procedures on women and girls. While this will inevitable be focused on the worst offending nations, such as Sudan and Somalia, all the nations should be involved in the policy-making procedure. My recommendations for such policies would firstly require an improvement of the enforcement of the laws already in existence. This would require more transparency regarding the practice of FGM in different states, including who performs the procedures and where they are performed. This would require the training of more individuals, be they police officers or medical assistants, to prevent female genital mutilation from occurring under clandestine surroundings. There must also be greater punishments for those who violate the laws set in place so that there is a genuine deterrent for performing female genital cutting. A prison sentence of several years would not be inappropriate for the violation of a human right. However, as previously mentioned, severe laws and punishments are worthless if they cannot be enforced. While a quick fix may be to send in United Nations peace-keepers or volunteers from the various departments mentioned above, the societies themselves must ultimately learn to control the problem themselves or the issue will never be permanently solved. Another policy recommendation is the ability for the United Nations to have more access to states which are violating human rights. Allowing the United Nations and its associated organizations greater access to areas may step on the toes of a country's sovereignty. However, if the state itself is unable to remedy the situation within a reasonable amount of time then the United Nations and the bodies considered most relevant to the human

right violated should be allowed greater access to the country in terms of aid, education and immediate relief.

One could also recommend that sanctions be placed on states which do not adhere to international laws or rulings which lead to the demise of FGM. However, sanctions have been issued by the United States in the past with little success. As a coercive strategy the United States linked, "financial aid to the eradication of female genital cutting,"⁷⁵ but despite this, FGM is still prevalent. Therefore, enforcing sanctions on states which do not comply may not be the best solution.

Linked to the argument above, international and regional institutions could single out states that practice FGM and, if the number of procedures does not decrease, set about de-legitimising the governments. While this may sound somewhat risky and an invasion of sovereignty, this is not necessarily the case. The international bodies, such as the World Health Organization, UNIFEM and UNICEF would merely be calling out the national government and highlighting the extent of their violations to the international community. This would lead to the public humiliation of the states which allow FGM, arguing that they are incapable of controlling their own country. It would also question how representative the leaders are of their countries, which may be slightly embarrassing on the international stage. This would apply international pressure to the state and, in such an interdependent international system, would lead them to alter their attitude and approach to the issue of FGM. However, this policy will only succeed if the accusations from the international bodies are vehemently felt and meant, and justified against the state.

A more direct response which the groups mentioned above could take would be to provide safe-havens for women and girls who have been the victim of female genital cutting or are fleeing from such a fate. As in the case of Fauziya Kassindja in Togo,⁷⁶ there were no safe-havens, and so providing facilities where women can flee the practice would be beneficial. These safe-havens would provide food and shelter for women and children, as well as medical treatment for those who have undergone FGM or have been injured in the process of escaping. This would also mean provision of medical equipment and drugs such as anaesthetic and antibiotics. The safe-haven would also, ideally, provide more permanent facilities and homes for these victims, being responsible for transporting them to states where FGM is not practiced. This may include helping to secure

asylum in foreign countries on the basis of human rights violations. The safe-havens must also provide psychological support for the women and girls, such as counsellors and psychiatrists to help victims cope with the trauma they experience. However, this is a short-term plan, as the main aim of any project would be that the education described above would discourage the practice. This would, therefore, make the safe-havens obsolete after a certain point. While safe-havens may be band-aids for the issue, the root of the problem must be solved within societies in order to fully eradicate FGM. If this is the case, then the safe-havens would need to be in operation long enough to give a generation the chance to eliminate the practice. Therefore, in many ways, this is a relatively short-term and temporary investment on the part of the United Nations and the World Health Organization.

Funding is one of the main ways in which international governmental bodies can aid the elimination of FGM. The international bodies of the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Human Rights High Commissioner, UNICEF and UNIFEM have the resources to be able to fund the education programmes suggested above. By providing teachers for both academic and skill based programmes, these international organizations could contribute considerably. United Nations organizations can also provide the initial resources needed to establish these programmes including classrooms, textbooks and raw materials. Funding can also be found for safe-havens for victims or potential victims of FGM described above.

Conclusion

There is no question that female genital mutilation is an horrific and degrading practice, and a clear violation of human rights. While laws can be passed and safe-havens built, this practice will ultimately cease because of a fundamental change within the societies and cultures which perform it. Although the greatest challenge shall be tackling the customs and cultural ties of female genital cutting, it is also the most crucial. Without changing the cultural perspectives and social beliefs about the virtues of female genital mutilation, there is no hope of eradicating the practice permanently. Enforcing laws and restrictions may temporarily lessen the number of victims, but the idea of female genital mutilation must be transformed from a practice that encourages chastity, purity and social status to one which shows female

genital cutting to be a violent and painful ritual which deprives women and girls of their human rights and, in many ways, sense of self.

ENDNOTES

1. When considering the case of female genital mutilation, there have been various terms which have been used to describe this practice. I have exclusively, other than when quoting others, referred to the practice as female genital mutilation or female genital cutting. I have been careful to avoid the expression 'female circumcision' as it draws comparisons to male circumcision. FGM is considerably more damaging and traumatic to the individual. The male equivalent of infibulation would be, "the amputation of most of the penis." Therefore, when discussing this issue it is crucial to use vocabulary which accurately reflects the procedure and, indeed, the experience which women face—namely, mutilation.

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12. World Health Organization, "Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation: An Interagency Statement," 4.
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27. Althaus, 132.
28. Islam & Uddin, 74.
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30. World Health Organization, 6.

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Climate Change and its Effects on World Hunger

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*"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age, or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."*¹

— Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

ACCORDING TO THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION of Human Rights, everyone world has the right to an adequate supply of food, yet 1.02 billion people in the world go hungry everyday.² Hunger is a pervasive and devastating reality facing every country in our world and it is getting worse with every minute that goes by. In fact, the number of people who go hungry increased by 75 million in 2007 and an additional 40 million in 2008 with the number growing this year and likely continue doing so in the years to follow.³ There is no single explanation for why so many people go hungry each day, be it poverty, conflict, or bad governance. However, one reason that is starting to gain much attention is climate change. Climate change has devastating effects on food security and world hunger when increased incidences of

natural disasters and environmental change affect regions already plagued by poverty, disadvantageous land practices, and rising food prices. These are problems that the international community must come to terms with by taking serious measures to combat global warming in the long-term, as well as looking to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for plans to help alleviate its negative effects in the developing world today.

Climate Change and Food Security

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change of the United Nations and the World Meteorological Organization define climate change as, “a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.”⁴ The effects of these atmospheric changes are seen in extended dry seasons in already arid areas, such as sub-Saharan Africa, which cause crops to disappear and livestock to perish. It has also brought heavy rains down on areas in Southeast Asia and the United States, fueling floods that have washed away crops and pastures full of livestock and also destroyed homes, businesses, lives and entire communities. Here is a brief glimpse of the effects of climate change:

Suddenly we heard a noise...the embankment was breached and the water flooded towards our houses. We just managed to save our lives, but not the household contents or our domestic animals...the water washed them all away. For two days we lived in complete fear . . . Balkru Behera, Orissa, India, 2007⁵

Balkru, who lost everything in a 2007 flood, is just one of an estimated 250 million individuals who are affected by natural disasters as a result of climate change each year. By 2015, it has been projected that this number could grow by more than 50 percent to an average of over 375 million people affected by climate-related disasters each year.⁶ In addition to outright loss of life and property, the global community recognizes that the disasters that result from climate change have a detrimental effect on food security, an already significant issue in the third world.

One of the primary causes of world hunger is the lack of food security. Food security entails “an access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.”⁷ Despite technological advances, weather

is still a key factor in the agricultural process; most of the food the world eats needs good-old sunshine, water, rich soil, and tender hands. Climate change can cause there to be an abundance or shortage of sunshine and water, neither of which is ideal for agricultural productivity. For example, the largest recorded food crises (1974, 1984/1985, 1992, 2002, and the one going on today) in Africa can be attributed to drought.⁸ With environmental conditions already unpredictable, the advent of climate change further increases the risks for agriculture, thus reducing harvests and interfering with consumers getting the amount of food that they need.

Another of the main concerns surrounding climate change's effect on food security that has caused people to go hungry is the loss of "good" land, or land that can be cultivated. Most studies point to Africa, more specifically, sub-Saharan Africa as being one of areas that will suffer the most from climate change. In sub-Saharan Africa, close to 95 percent of its population works in agriculture⁹ and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) conservatively estimates that there are 212 million people suffering from hunger in sub-Saharan Africa alone.¹⁰ If the world continues to increase in temperature, these numbers will increase; more individuals and households will go hungry. As a result of climate change, Sub-Saharan Africa has experienced an increase in land with "moisture stress," that is, land consisting of soil that lacks an adequate amount of moisture for plants to grow in. This means an expansion of land with severe climate, soil or terrain constraints by 30-60 million hectares.¹¹ This is especially detrimental in that most of the crops produced in sub-Saharan Africa are rain-fed crops as opposed to irrigation-fed crops. If unaddressed, climate change will also continue to lessen the amount of rainfall in areas that need it the most, among rural populations that depend on agriculture for their livelihood.

In order to understand the full impact of climate change, it is important to understand the nature of world hunger in today's world. Those who go hungry each day are mainly individuals and families who are living below the international poverty line, earning less than \$1.25 per day.¹² Poverty is most prevalent among rural populations in developing countries, such as the rural populations found in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Hunger in these rural agricultural communities is a result of underproduction of food, the inability to retain enough of what individuals and households produce to sustain them, and increases in food prices. Individuals have little, if any, control over what they produce and how much, as well as

how much they and their families are able to keep and consume. These are determined by social, economic and political arrangements including land tenure and use policies, sharecropping or tenancy arrangements, land oriented to the production of export crops, taxation policies, or government procurement policies.¹³

Many farmers in rural areas around the world, which ironically tend to compose a substantial proportion of those who are hungry, do not own the land they farm. Therefore, they are essentially powerless when it comes to the types of crops they will grow and the distribution of the food they produce. Almost all of these landless farmers will send most of their produce to the market, leaving little for them to keep. In addition, many are forced to grow export crops such as cocoa, coffee, tea, sugar, oilseeds, rubber, cotton, or tropical foods.¹⁴ These export crops are being produced on the most prime agricultural land, which is consequently not being used to support the people who live in the country. As a result, there are comparatively few individuals or households in the world that are totally reliant on the food that they grow throughout the year.¹⁵ If they are lucky, they may be given a small piece of land to produce food for their own consumption, but for the most part, they will have to rely on their wages to *purchase* food for their families or go hungry. In Ghana, for example, women have said they eat less now and they hope they will have food to give their children once they return from school; markets are becoming smaller because many are not able to afford the rising prices and sellers stop selling.¹⁶ This focus on production for foreign rather than local consumption is perpetuating the crisis of hunger in the developing world.

Being that many households rely on purchased food, they are extremely vulnerable to increases in the price of food. Since 2002, the price of food worldwide has increased by 64 percent.¹⁷ This rise is due to the increasing costs of production, seed, fertilizer, and the transportation costs due to rising oil prices. Additionally, food that is imported is inherently more expensive than food that is locally grown. The poor, and subsequently the hungry, have such a small income to begin with that even the smallest fluctuation in food prices can have dramatic effects on their ability to purchase food to sustain them.¹⁸ For example, Haiti, with 75 percent of its population living on \$2 a day and 50 percent on less than \$1, is one of the poorest countries in the world.¹⁹ Haitian staples, which consist of black beans, corn, and rice, are all imports, so they are among those who

are hit the hardest from the increase of food prices. Many Haitians have no food and no idea where their next meal will come from and some have even resorted to eating dirt because food prices at the markets are just too high.²⁰ Many families have turned to alternative strategies to generate income to sustain them. Such strategies include “divesting of productive assets such as livestock and exchange of their land for food; fire wood sale increasing deforestation; consumption of their seeds; pulling children out of school; migration to look for jobs often in less productive sectors.”²¹ Depending on the severity of the disaster families may leave their villages and migrate to urban areas or refugee camps. It has been estimated that if food prices were to *lower* so that at every income level 10 percent more calories might be consumed, that would reduce the world’s hungry by 47 percent.²² The combined effect of climate change’s natural disasters and environmental change with farmers who do not get to eat what they grow and wages too low to keep up with rising world food prices is a dramatic decrease in world food security.

Climate change, however, is not the sole reason as to why so many individuals are devastatingly affected by these disasters every year. The significance of the climate change’s impact on the level of those in need and the number of people at risk depends entirely on the level of economic development of the affected country.²³ It is the combination of environmental stress in the developing world with a lack of state capacity to cope with and recover from environmental change, whereas developed countries have the resources and technology available to ensure that their populations will have food whatever the temperature or level of water.²⁴ Developed countries have their fair share of climate related disasters, like Hurricane Katrina, that leave the people of those countries in less than ideal situations, but they also have sufficient warnings of the disasters, thanks to sophisticated weather monitoring systems and alerting and evacuation systems, and ample infrastructure and resources to support those affected by the disasters. Developing countries like those in Africa or Southeast Asia, in contrast, that are hit every year by climate-related disasters do not have the support networks in place to cope with the negative consequences of these disasters. Most, if not all, of these countries do not know when such disasters are going to strike, leaving the people more vulnerable. So the countries that are most severely affected by climate-related disasters likely had food security issues to start with. The connection between these

developing countries and climate-related disasters is the countries' lack of governmental policies to adequately feed their people regardless of a climate-related disasters, the lack of mechanisms detect this disasters and properly warn their people, and then to cope with the aftermath when disaster does strike.²⁵

Policy Recommendations

The logical conclusion to solve the issue of climate change is to control the weather. While this seems ludicrous, controlling the weather is a viable solution to limit the effects that climate change has on people across the world and lessening the amount of people who go hungry as a result. Recall that the sort of climate change discussed above is not a natural occurrence; we as humans have contributed to the earth's increasing temperature, causing the torrential rains and floods that wipe out whole communities and causing the earth to crack beneath the feet of desperate families, causing individuals to starve. Therefore, climate change, or global warming, needs global action to ensure that these disasters will lessen in the future so individuals and households in these developing countries that are hit the hardest can one day not have to worry about floods and droughts destroying their lives.

The United States has officially acknowledged that global warming *is* real and has real consequences. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, in a preparatory session for the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate held at the State Department in April 2009, said that climate change is

An environmental issue, a health issue, an economic issue, an energy issue and a security issue . . . It is a threat that is global in scope but also local and national in impact . . . No issue we face today has broader long-term consequences or greater potential to alter the world for future generations.²⁶

The Obama Administration has proposed legislation to Congress that would place a market-based cap on carbon dioxide outputs to help meet the goal of cutting national emissions 80 percent by 2050.²⁷ The world, too, has acknowledged the significance of global warming. The United Nations has established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and held a Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen in December 2009. At the 2008 G8 Summit, countries committed to *halve* global

carbon emissions by 2050 without any baseline year or mid-term targets.²⁸ Global poverty and global warming made it onto the 2009 G8 summit agenda once again. The defining global standard, however, is the Kyoto Protocol Treaty that was formulated in December 1997 and came into force February 16th, 2005. The treaty sets binding targets for 37 industrialized countries and the European community for reducing greenhouse gas emissions at an average of five percent against 1990 levels over the five-year period 2008-2012.²⁹

Both developing and developed countries are home to numerous pollutant producing factories that have little to no regulations placed upon them, but the developed industrialized countries are the main producers of greenhouse gases.³⁰ Therefore, they need to continue to be the primary actors combating climate change and the examples to follow for the rest of the world. These countries, such as the countries of the European Union, Japan and Canada, have made great strides since the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol that signaled the international acceptance of global warming as a legitimate concern, but that is not enough. All countries in the world continue to spill greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, some at an alarming rate. Most of the attempts being made by the organizations mentioned above are modest. If these countries are serious about significantly reducing the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere each year they would need commit to at least reduce the emissions by 70 percent. If climate change is as serious as Secretary Clinton said it is, then all of these powerful countries need to strengthen their commitment to significantly lessening greenhouse gas emissions.

It is safe to say that even if this commitment is taken more seriously by the international community, the issue of climate change is not going to solve itself overnight. Countries across the world are faced with climate-related disasters today. While climate change is being tackled at the international level, forces need to be implemented at the grassroots level to help communities cope with the immediate affects of climate change.

Firstly, these communities need direct emergency relief when climate-related disasters hit, but giving them medical attention, food, water, and building supplies for new villages is not enough. There needs to be a larger emphasis placed on *long-term* recovery programs supported by countries and international organizations. Long-term recovery programs focus on providing secure sources of food and family income. These programs will

help make individuals and households more prepared for when another climate-related disaster hits and will help individuals and households *survive* climate-related disasters. For instance, more attention and resources need to be focused on helping these communities gain some footing financially by providing things like education in new innovative farming techniques to combat the effects of climate-related disasters. Rural infrastructure in these areas also needs to be improved.

There are many examples of long-term recovery programs throughout the world, but they are being implemented by only a handful of organizations. One example is the West Africa Rice Development Association or the Africa Rice Center (WARDA). This association consists of 22 African countries that are dedicated to discovering and implementing new varieties of rice that are hardier and more drought-resistant. They focus on teaching small rural communities how to farm these new crops to help alleviate poverty and hunger in Africa. WARDA continually provides the seeds for these crops, as well. Farmers who grow these varieties are less likely to be effected by the impacts of climate change as their food source is more secure.

The Pastoralist Integrated Support Programme (PISP) is another great organization working in Africa, specifically Kenya. Its mission is to help relieve household poverty and hunger by establishing sustainable water access.³¹ PISP has built rain harvesting water tanks, sand dams, shallow wells, and community water tanks in various locations throughout Kenya. Water is more than just one of the basic necessities for humans, animals, and plants. It allows for families to have food security and to a source of income in that they will be able to grow crops and raise livestock for market. It also improves security in many countries as individuals will not have to leave their communities to travel through unsafe regions in search of water. Having a source of water is the most vital resource any community can have. Without water people and livestock cannot live and plants certainly cannot grow, both of which dramatically reduce food security.

CARE is one of the largest organizations implementing long-term recovery programs. This organization provides immediate relief and aid, but it also acknowledges the importance of long-term programs to arm these communities with skills and the infrastructure to handle climate-related disasters. They are located in countries all over the world from Central America to Africa to Asia. In Guatemala and El Salvador, countries

devastated by hurricanes and massive floods, CARE has helped to create mini-irrigation systems, low-irrigation crops, and short-cycle crops. South Africa (Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) has been dealing with unreliable rains for years. CARE has taught communities in these countries how to farm drought-resistant crops and diversify their crops to be more nutritious. In Eritrea, CARE has deepened wells, distributed hardy varieties of seed, and helped households find new sources of income, like raising and selling chickens. In Lesotho, where there has been a lessening of rainfall over the last few years, CARE has been teaching households how to farm to feed themselves instead of relying on food at the local markets. CARE has also helped to implement technology for catching and storing rainwater to irrigate the new garden plots. Nepal is devastated by floods so CARE has been there teaching communities to understand the underlying causes of flash floods and how to survive them. CARE has also helped to plant trees to combat soil erosion from floods and taught the communities how to preserve these forests. Stopping soil from eroding will allow for crops to be planted more widely once the waters recede. The span and specificity of these programs is indicative of the variety of programs that can be implemented around the world to help combat the effects of climate change on food security.

Countries and organizations can also get involved in improving rural infrastructure in the countries hit by climate-related disasters. One area that needs major improvements is roads; according to one assessment, "expenditures on roads is the most important factor in poverty [and hunger] alleviation in rural areas."³² Poor roads are one of the biggest obstacles individuals face when wanting to sell their goods at the market. In some cases, roads may not even exist and if they do, they may be so heavily trafficked and run-down that they are not feasible for travel. Moreover, the difficulty of transporting goods from the countryside to local markets means that often crops spoil because individuals and households have no way of storing their goods. This leads to another improvement of rural infrastructures: storage facilities.³³ If countries and organizations focused on building storage facilities, individuals and households will be able to keep more food to sell at local markets. If goods could be stored, individuals and households would not have to bring all of their goods to market at once. Also, it would allow for crops to be stored during the harvesting seasons and then used during the agricultural off-season when

individuals and households are the most susceptible to hunger.³⁴ Storage facilities are also vital for communities hit hard by droughts and heavy rains. The facilities allow for individuals and households to have a source of food when there is no hope to grow or raise more when the land is too dry or too saturated with water. Improving rural infrastructures allows for more individuals and households to have the foundations to produce and raise food in the most effective ways, thus improving overall food security.

WARDA, PISP, and CARE have been doing great work, but they can by no means help all individuals and households affected by climate-related disasters, especially when funds have been decreasing for all kinds of aid and support over the past few years. More countries and organizations need to be involved in implementing long-term recovery programs, like the programs initiated by CARE. Climate change is not going to end overnight, so the communities affected need to be prepared for when more climate-related disasters hit so they can survive and not increase the amount of people who go hungry each day.

Conclusion

It is evident that climate change is wreaking havoc in countries all over the world. Climate-related disasters are exacerbating current causes of poverty and hunger and increasing the amounts of those living in poverty and going hungry each day. The stories of the individuals and households devastated by climate-related disasters are heartbreaking and a sense of helplessness is unavoidable when thinking about the men, women, and children affected. Fortunately, countries and organizations are dedicated to decreasing the causes of climate change and helping to empower individuals and households to fight and survive the effects of climate-related disasters. The combination of combating climate change and teaching families how to survive climate-related disasters is one of the most effective ways in which to relieve hunger in this world. 250 million individuals are affected each year by climate-related disasters. That is 250 million potential people who will be added to the almost *one billion* individuals who go hungry each year. This is why more aggressive alleviations of the causes of climate change are needed and more countries devoted to implementing long-term recovery programs throughout the world. Access to food is a universal human right and one that deserves to be advocated for.

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Feed the People

A Case for Genetically Modified Crops

JORDAN LARIGAN

WITH AN ESTIMATED 923 MILLION PEOPLE malnourished and famine prone, it is morally imperative that the international community attempt to provide effective aid to alleviate hunger. The provision of direct food aid has historically been problematic, so we must look toward alternative resources to help hunger-stricken populations. One such tool is the use of genetically modified crops (GMC), although GMC's are a highly controversial. Debates arise from their use, such as whether or not there are health risks to human consumers and their long-term consequences. Genetically modified crops are the result of scientists engaging in biotechnology by using living organisms, or parts of these organisms, to modify produce to make it more practical for consumers.¹ The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), defines genetically modified crops as foods genetically engineered "whose genetic makeup has been altered through a process called recombinant DNA, or gene splicing, to give a plant a desirable trait."² Proponents, particularly those in the United States, argue that this technology makes possible the mass production of agriculture with built-in resistance to droughts, herbicides, pesticides, particular diseases, and possibly with enhanced health benefits. Opposing viewpoints from Europe argue that there has not been enough research conducted to deem genetically modified crops as safe, and some

European countries choose not to allow them for human consumption. Despite this debate, I argue that genetically modified crops have the potential to assist starving populations. By targeting global regions affected by famine and implementing the use of genetically modified crops in those regions, people will be able to sustain themselves in the face of the growing hunger epidemic.

Understanding GMCs

Genetically modified crops began to draw attention in the early 1990's. The technology broke the boundary between traditional methods of genetic modification, such as cross-fertilization, and newer genetic engineering. Cross-fertilization still produces a plant with a desired trait, but it also mixes thousands of other traits from previous plants. This requires farmers to conduct many attempts over long periods to weed out unwanted traits and acquire the perfect specimen. By using the new genetic engineering capabilities, however, experts can produce the desired agriculture with more precision, predictability, and at a quicker pace. Scientists can insert one or more genes into a specific plant, giving it a new characteristic, without unwanted traits.³ Such traits consist of resurrection genes, herbicides, and other genes to prevent insects and fungal infections, which we will discuss in greater detail later on. In theory, scientists are now able to give crops particular characteristics to help them grow, which could be beneficial for production and exportation of agriculture. In the late 1990's into the new millennium, transgenic manipulation became the new way of producing crops in much of the developed world. The first genetically modified products to reach consumers were genetically enhanced tomatoes with capabilities to slow down the process of rotting and help with ripening.⁴ Quickly after, several field crops such as corn and soybean were produced with improvements in herbicide and insect tolerance. As of 1998, more than 15 million hectares of maize corn were growing in the United States,⁵ and in 2003, the FDA reported that more than 100 million acres were growing and much of those materials are being exported to other countries. In fact, in the same year the United States estimated that 75 percent of all processed foods in the U.S. contained a GM ingredient.⁶

The United States argues that there are several benefits deriving from the products of biotechnology, including increased agricultural output, more nutritional food products, and less use of agricultural chemicals, fertilizers,

and water in the commercial agricultural sector. Jim Dunwell, professor at The University of Reading, conducted research in transgenic methods and targeting particular cells for modification. His research concluded that genetic engineering has successfully reduced the content of proteins with specific allergenic properties in rice, a process that could potentially be adopted in the peanut. In addition, his research explains that scientists have sufficient biochemical capabilities to modify the vitamin content of plants, which he has done successfully with rice and Vitamin A.⁷ Lastly, pharmaceutical advancements have also derived from this new technology. In a recent study, "a transgenic plant expression system was capable of synthesizing an immunogenic form of the diabetes-associated auto antigen, glutamic acid decarboxylase. When provided as a dietary supplement, the transgenic plant inhibited the development of diabetes in a non-obese diabetic mouse."⁸ This is crucial scientific evidence suggesting that genetic engineering can enhance human life and produce plants that are more nutritious for consumption. Theoretically, if populations affected by poverty and famine were able to grow GM seeds and other plants within their own state, these plants would flourish regardless of climate and poor treatment, thus providing more food that would not spoil as rapidly. Although this theory has beneficial ends, and evidence suggests that GM products are capable of being healthy and marketed, opposing views still suggest that they are not safe, thus delaying the arrival of GM technology in places that could be radically improved by its benefits.

The Politics Surrounding GMCs

Due to the strict scrutiny of GM crops, the FDA and Codex, an entity derived from the World Health Organization, adopted international guidelines for biotech food safety.⁹ These guidelines include advising companies on testing for food safety and, once tests are completed, returning results for scientific evaluation. This regulation of GM crops and their products has stimulated controversy, specifically between the United States' focus on production and the European Union's focus on the process of biotechnology. Although there is no reputable scientific evidence suggesting that approved GM crops are unsafe for human consumption, the political and regulatory systems of many importing countries provide little confidence that trading GM crops will simply be accepted.¹⁰ The European Union is not in favor of GM crop production, and employs the precautionary

principle as support to justify their reasoning. The precautionary principle, formed in the 1999 European Council, states that GM products "should not be placed on the market until it could be demonstrated that there is no adverse impact on human health and the environment, and that principles regarding traceability and labeling be applied."¹¹ Advocates of the precautionary principle believe that if preventative measures are not taken today, then the use of this new technology could be potentially harmful in the future. In addition, advocates believe that scientific certainty should not be the only factor in determining the use of GM crops. The purpose of the principle is to indicate that the absence of scientific certainty, relating to risk or harm, should not postpone the use of preventative measures, such as labeling GM products or not allowing GM crops to be sold for human consumption.¹² Although this principle seems to be a reasonable concern of governments, it is not practical for food production and exportation. The application of terms such as "traceability" and "labeling" to the principle makes exporting food products with GM ingredients almost impossible, as almost all foods that contain GM ingredients must be labeled, regardless of whether relevant DNA or proteins are still detectable. In addition, the EU contradicts their views by requiring the labeling of animal feed, yet meat, milk, and eggs obtained from animals fed with GM feed do not require labeling.¹³ Considering that animals eat GM crops, it is interesting that the EU does not require labeling of goods produced from those animals.

The United States, in contrast, produces and exports more GM crops than any other nation. As a result, it is no wonder the US is a strong proponent of GM crops. The United States explained that the safety of GM products is well established by international institutions such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the World Health Organization, as well as independent scientists in the United States and Europe.¹⁴ If the institutions that are responsible for the regulation and safety of all other foods are testing and approving GM crops for consumption, it is argued, then there is no reason that people should not trust their decision concerning GM production.

Although the WTO acknowledges their fears, it believes that the EU should provide scientific evidence to support their reasoning. Under the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) policies, a ban by the WTO on GM products must meet

particular risk assessment criteria and provide scientific justification if the risk exceeded international standards.¹⁵ For instance, the SPS Agreement offers that where scientific evidence is insufficient, members can introduce conditional measures aimed at protecting human, animal, or plant life or health.¹⁶ Conflict, however, occurs if the United States approves a GM product, but the European Union claims there is scientific reason not to approve the product for import. Due to the extent of this controversy, and a complaint by the US concerning the EU's regulations of GM products, the World Trade Organization (WTO) held a hearing deciding the outcome of the EU's strict regulations. The WTO Dispute Panel ruled their case on three aspects. First, the EU was inconsistent with its obligations under the SPS Agreement because they did not apply for the suspension of importing GM products. Second, after using measures to delay the approval of 24 GM crops, the EU again did not live up to their obligations. Lastly, safeguard measures implemented by six EU member states against the import of GM crops never correlated with risk assessments required by the SPS Agreement. In all cases, the panel concluded that the EU safeguard measures were never based on risk assessment nor did they apply to use the precautionary approach. Due to these failed obligations, the panel ruled "that the EU failed its WTO obligations by not lifting its moratorium on the approval of GM crops and delaying the approval of new crops. In addition, the WTO ruled against the marketing and import bans put in place by six EU member states."¹⁷ Following the WTO decision, it is clear that the experts in the international community believe GM crops are safe for human consumption; therefore, these safe crops should be used to benefit famine affected regions to ensure stability and sustainability of life throughout those underdeveloped areas.

Using GMCs to Alleviate Hunger and Create Food Security

While the EU-US debate rages, famine and world hunger continue to be ongoing, worldwide predicaments. Although there is no specific listing for hunger or famine under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the right to life is included and famine is depriving people of their right to life due to a lack of basic, primal needs of survival. Sending aid to developing countries is the modern method for helping those nations who are impoverished and cannot provide for themselves but the problem with this method is that those who are supposed to receive the aid are often the ones

who never see it. However, what if there was a way to help regionally target these nations suffering from famine and provide effective assistance in relieving their struggles? Advocates of GM products believe that this new technology can assist nations who are suffering from widespread hunger and create sustainability within these regions.

Theoretically, if nations affected by famine were provided with GM seeds that are capable of growing in undesirable climates and delay the decaying process, they would be able to sustain life within the community with reduced reliance on foreign food aid. The Nuffield Council on Bioethics in London published a report agreeing with this theory stating, "We do not claim that GM crops will eliminate world hunger...however, we do believe that GM technology could make a useful contribution."¹⁸ In addition, the council explains that after reviewing scientific developments, they believe there is a moral imperative for making GM crops readily and economically available to people in developing countries.¹⁹

The FAO's 2007 estimate of 923 million people worldwide suffering from malnourishment continues to rise.²⁰ With the world's population growing at a rapid pace, food security will continue to diminish; therefore, many more will suffer and hunger-related deaths will also rise. Recent attempts to sustain food security, such as deforestation or soil nutrient mining, have only caused more environmental degradation due to continuous cropping with insufficient fallow. The problem with this is, "Poverty and food insecurity cause environmental degradation, and environmental degradation exacerbates poverty and food insecurity, creating a vicious cycle that must be broken if sustainable food security is to be achieved."²¹ In addition, more than half the world's poor and food insecure reside in regions with poor soil quality, irregular rainfall, limited income, and failed infrastructure.²² This is why GM technology is so important for sustaining food security now and in the devastating future that is to come if change does not occur. Again, with gene manipulation, crops will grow in poor quality soil and with irregular rainfall, thus making GM technology the key to helping sustain food security in famine-affected regions.

Jennifer Thomson, chair of the African Agricultural Technology Foundation in Kenya and professor at South Africa's Cape Town University conducted a study where she met with leading African agricultural experts, researchers, officials, and farmers who listed desired characteristics for their crops. This list consisted of insect-resistant African maize varieties, crops

resistant to African viruses, biofortified crops, drought tolerant crops, and maize resistant to parasitic weeds. After conducting the study, Thomson concluded that GM maize has potential benefits for farmers, and that its insect-resistant abilities help to decrease fungal infections in crops.²³ In addition to her findings, many insecticides used in Africa are highly toxic, and farmers carrying knapsacks spray for hours and subject themselves to health risks. If African farmers use GM crops that are resistant to insects and viruses, then their food will be healthier and they will use fewer pesticides. The absence of pesticides will be an environmental benefit as well.

Thomson and her colleagues are making progress toward drought tolerant agriculture as well, another devastating condition in parts of Africa. They are isolating genes from a South African indigenous *Xerophyta viscosa* plant, better known as resurrection plant, to develop drought-tolerant maize.²⁴ These plants have the ability to lose 95 percent of their water content, appearing to be dead, for months. Once they receive water again, the plants come back to life, thus receiving the name resurrection plants. After completing her testing, Thomson's transgenic plants showed positive tolerance to dehydration, heat, and salt stresses.²⁵ These new findings suggest that GM plants can be extremely beneficial to African farmers. With the use of GM plants, these farmers will be able to cultivate crops in dry, hot climates, and use fewer pesticides to ensure a safer farming environment. This means farming will be more consistent, safer, and provide more food for those who are food deprived. Aware that studies show GM crops are beneficial to farmers living in regions affected by famine, it is important to determine how to implement GM crops into these areas and help alleviate hunger.

Although some experts agree that GM production could be beneficial to African farmers, a majority of them still refuse to grow GM crops. Thomson claims it is the UK and Europe Union that negatively influence African leaders to refuse the use of GM crops.²⁶ This is not surprising considering Africa's export markets are in Europe and the UK. While the EU nations portray their complaints as predominantly concerning safety, their actual concern is competition. Many farmers in Europe who oppose the use of GM products fear global agricultural domination by large multinational corporations. In Gwyn Williams' field work, she found that activists not only fear irreversible genetic contamination, but they claim the real problem is the neoliberal world, promoted by the WTO, in which

multinational corporations who dominate the GM industry are given free reign to patent, privatize, and profit.²⁷ Farmers who choose to grow non-GM products would be extremely unsuccessful compared to the multinational corporations who have the ability to mass-produce seeds and agriculture, thus potentially putting these independent farmers out of business. A Larzac farmer explains, "Patents and genetic modification are the technical and economic means by which power is exercised and farmers are forced into dependence on biotechnology firms...So the farmer becomes no more than a worker for those big multinationals or those big seed enterprises that impose an agricultural system that will impoverish farmers by imposing prices and trade."²⁸ Lastly, French activists want to ensure that the law protects peoples' fundamental rights before it guarantees rights to free trade; otherwise, farmers will always be controlled by multinationals.²⁹ Although governments are more engaged in this capitalist aspect of GM production, they must acknowledge that their actions have a direct impact on those who suffer from famine.

Aware of the effects of hunger and famine, the UN's Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Humanitarian Needs in Southern Africa conducted a mission report that concluded, "Food aid will be essential for some time to come, but it must be combined with radical agricultural strategies and labour-saving technologies that increase resilience to erratic rainfall, help to generate income, and re-stimulate local food production without adding extra burdens on households..."³⁰ This is an ambitious goal, and currently many of the UN's policies in helping Africa lack the means to accomplish it.

In response, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Division for Sustainable Development is currently launching programs such as Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) and The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The SARD program's major objectives are to increase food production, enhance food security, and contribute to sustainable natural resource management.³¹ Even though this policy exists, nowhere does it recommend the use of GM crops. If SARD implements the use of GM technology in their policy, it will help famine-affected regions to meet all of the program's major objectives because GM technology does increase food production by providing farmers with more options to grow in tougher climates that also survive African viruses. In addition, GM technology will not only increase food

production, but also enhance food security because GM crops spoil less rapidly, and can be stored for longer periods. Although NEPAD is not strictly dedicated to Africa's food production and security, it does focus on Africa's sustainability and development. The main objective for this program is to encourage African countries to become partners in eradicating poverty through sustained economic growth and development.³² African countries could collaborate with one another and use GM technology to help themselves develop better agricultural status and increase trade with other countries. This opens doors for economic growth and sustainability within the continent, and enables them to become more globalized.

Conclusion

Hunger, malnutrition and starvation deprive people of their human rights. It is beneficial for famine-affected regions to use GM technology to increase food production and alleviate hunger and malnutrition. Although GM crops are still a controversial issue between the United States and the European Union, the WTO Dispute Panel reinforced that scientific evidence sides with GM technology. The WTO still recognizes the EU's precautionary principle, but states that without scientific evidence proving GM technology unsafe there is no reason to halt its production. Furthermore, revolutionary small-scale farmers in Europe are angered more because of multinational corporations putting them out of business than by the actual health risks with GM products. Even though the EU is negatively influencing African leaders away from using GM technology, studies prove the beneficial aspects that GM technology has to offer to Africa's agriculture. With plants that now are tolerant to droughts, viruses, and that spoil at slower rates, famine-affected regions can increase food production, store food for longer periods, and sustain life. By incorporating the use of GM technology in the SARD and NEPAD programs, and combining those policies with the amending of the UDHR to specifically recognize hunger as a human rights violation, famine-affected regions will begin to dissipate and world hunger will be on the decline. It is imperative that governments amend policies and use GM crops to enhance food security and fight world hunger.

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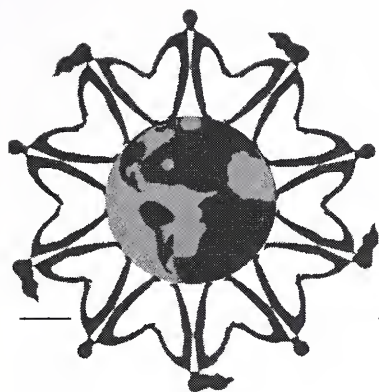
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NOTES FROM
ABROAD



What We Are Up Against is Separation

DAVID HOSEY '07

I HAVE A VENDETTA AGAINST WALLS.

For some reason, it has taken me months to write this. Sentences and phrases have been floating in my brain that whole time, surfacing occasionally to disturb the waters. Sometimes it takes an outside push, a rock dropped in the pond.

The other day a friend asked me, "What did you think when you went to Mexico and saw the Wall?" It wasn't just a casual question. She knew that it wasn't my first experience with a wall built to divide.

I lived in Jerusalem from September 2007-December 2008. If the early church considered Jerusalem to be the center of the world, I wonder what they would think of the city today, divided as it is by a massive concrete wall, some 25 feet high, studded with watchtowers and barbed wire and defiant graffiti, broken in places by checkpoints that serve as choke points on the movement and access of Palestinian civilians. In urban areas, the wall is twice as high as the Berlin Wall, and its total length stretches four times as long. Its route snakes deep in the West Bank, Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967. More than 75% of its projected route is inside the West Bank, rather than on the internationally recognized border between Israel and the hoped-for Palestinian state.¹

The Wall divides not only Israelis from Palestinians—a problematic enough separation if there is ever to be peace in the land that is called Holy—but Palestinians from Palestinians. In the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Abu Dis, close to where I lived, it runs right up the center of the street, cutting Palestinians off from family, work places, places of worship, schools, and clinics that used to be just across the way. In villages like Bil'in, Jayyous, and Ni'lin, it cuts Palestinian farmers off from land and water resources that they have had access to for hundreds of years. A July 9, 2004 advisory ruling from the International Court of Justice declared the route of the Wall to be illegal under international humanitarian and human rights law.² Palestinian communities, with the solidarity of Israeli and international human rights defenders, have worked and marched and demonstrated and struggled against the construction of the Wall. Nineteen Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli army during protests against the Wall. The youngest of these, Ahmed Husan Youssef Mousa, was only 10 years old.³ Hundreds more protestors, Israelis, Palestinians, and internationals, have been wounded. One U.S. citizen, Tristan Anderson, was shot in the face with a high velocity tear gas canister and remains hospitalized with brain damage almost a year later.⁴ If he had been Palestinian, he likely would have died—prevented from reaching necessary care because of restrictions on Palestinian movement.

So I'm no stranger to dividing wall. When our OnFire/BorderLinks group reached the border crossing in Nogales, and got our first glimpse of the U.S./Mexico Border Wall, it seemed an oddly familiar sight. Nogales used to be one community, straddling the border between Mexico and the United States. Now it is cut in two—separated, divided by that ugly wall.

It sounds strange to say, but compared to the massive Apartheid Wall in Jerusalem (the Hebrew word for the wall, "Hafrada," means separation—just like the term "Apartheid" in Afrikaans) the U.S./Mexico border wall looks a bit...dinky. Constructed largely out of scrap metal from the United States' first foray into invading Iraq, the Wall left me with the impression that, given enough momentum, enough people, we could just push it down.

But it's no less solid, no less insurmountable for those with the wrong passport, than any other wall that's ever been built between people with economic resources and hands on the machinery of global power and those without. It's no less environmentally catastrophic, interfering not

only with human migration but with animal migration routes that are threatened with permanent disruption⁵. It's no less symbolic of separation and exploitation, of our inability to live the vision of Beloved Community offered to us by so many prophets over so many thousands of years. Our own home grown Separation Barrier is an ugly, rust colored reminder of our failure of imagination when it comes to our relationship with our neighbors to the South.

...

Walls across the world are remarkably, banally, similar. Walls that are built to divide are almost always built between populations "with" and populations "without." Walls that are built to divide are never constructed by communities coming together—the only walls built in that way are shelter walls, walls of houses and community centers and places worship and education. Walls built to divide are built by governments, by corporations, by power brokers—not by grassroots communities. Not by love.

The Walls in Palestine and the U.S./Mexico Border have more in common than symbolism, though. Both are being built, in one way or another, by U.S. taxpayer dollars. The West Bank Wall is subsidized and made possible by the more than \$3 billion in military aid that we pour into Israel each year, by loan guarantees and political support and UN vetoes offered without precondition. (The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has recently begun constructing another massive Wall, this one on the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt). There's a direct corporate connection, as well. Elbit Systems, an Israeli company that produces surveillance and military equipment, is responsible for much of the detection equipment on the West Bank Wall and has half of the contract on the Border Wall.

Elbit, by the way, is one example of the way that people power continues to exert itself against the power of Walls. Elbit's role in the Apartheid Wall in the West Bank has made it the target of international divestment campaigns. In response to a call from Palestinian civil society groups, human rights advocates around the world have spoken out—and acted out—against companies that profit from the ongoing conflict over and occupation of Palestinian land. The Palestinian Christian community has issued a Kairos call for churches around the world to join in these and efforts. Recently, a Norwegian government pension fund, a Danish bank,

and a Danish pension fund have pulled millions of dollars in investments from Elbit because of the company's violations of international law and human rights. Divestment campaigns in the United States, including in many churches and college campuses, are targeting Elbit and creating alliances with groups working for the rights of migrants. Campaigns like these begin to expose the cracks in the seemingly monolithic Walls that divide us—cracks that we can get our fingers in, to steady us or to climb up or to pull down.

...

Walls, to me, have become so symbolic of what it is that we are struggling against, of the break down of the community we are called to, our inability to cross borders and barriers and find common ground.

What we are up against is separation—separation of so many kinds. The Dividing Walls of the world literally separate us from our neighbors, entrenching the divisions of economic or political apartheid. Our own personal struggles and alienation make us feel separated—from each other and from the world around us.

Those of us who have taken the first stumbling steps in the walk toward justice and peace are up against separation, too. So often we get caught up in the narrow lanes of “issues” or “causes,” missing the Beloved Community created by our common struggle. There is a great need for all of us to commit to showing up not only for the “issue” we are most attached to but for each other's struggle and causes. We have to break down the walls that divide those working for immigration reform and those working for a just U.S. policy in the Middle East if we are ever going to break down the physical walls that we oppose.

The only tool we have to dismantle the Walls that separate us is our collective imagination, that Spirit that invites us to create communities across dividing lines. It is exactly this collective imagination, unrestricted by borders, that we see in the Palestinian villages of Bil'in, Jayyous, and so many others, where Palestinian communities invite Israeli and international human rights defenders to join them in their nonviolent struggle against the Wall, and to take the message of justice back to their governments and to the corporations behind the construction of separation. It is this

collective imagination that our OnFire group experienced when we spoke to Lupe Serrano at the Wall in Nogales, and he showed us the art that he and others have created on the Wall—something that is not allowed on the U.S. side—in a prophetic refusal to be contained. It is this collective imagination that we see as people of faith and hope join hands across borders and issues and identity groups, join hands and feet and voices in the great global uprising of people's movements dedicated to justice, peace, and a more equitable sharing of the resources of this incredible world.

What we are up against is separation. But separation, as powerful as it is, is remarkably susceptible to the steady, patient work of the candle-lighters and the border-crossers and the Wall-defiers.

We can build very tall Walls and very long Walls and very deep Walls. The Wall that is being built on the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt is deep enough to cut off tunnels that are the only means of commerce for the Palestinians in Gaza. The Wall that is being built on our southern border will supposedly be able to stop the wave of migration brought about by severe economic inequality. The Wall that the Israeli government builds in Palestine is supposed to be so high and so long that it will somehow be able to contain the anger of people who have been denied their freedom and their rights and their land.

But no matter how tall and how long and how deep we build these Walls, cracks begin to appear. Cracks that light can shine through. Cracks that voices can whisper through. Cracks that are big enough for our fingers, for our hands, for holding and for pulling and for climbing.

Together, we will pull down these walls. And imagine, just imagine, what beautiful things we can build instead with the leftover reminders of our former separation.

ENDNOTES

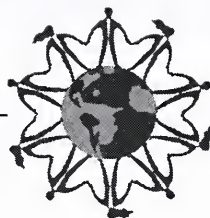
1. For more information on what the United Nations terms the "West Bank barrier," visit the website of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the occupied Palestinian territories: <http://www.ochaopt.org>

2. International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion. "Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory." Available online: <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/index.php?pr=71&code=mwp&p1=3&p2=4&%20p3=6&case=131&k=5a>

3. See the website of the Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign: www.stopthewall.org. For a complete list of Palestinian killed during anti-Wall protests, visit <http://palsolidarity.org/2009/06/7647>

4. Associated Press. "Israel closes case of U.S. activist hurt during West Bank protest." *Ha'aretz*. January 31, 2010. Available online: <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1146420.html>

5. The Sierra Club has more information on the environmental impacts of the U.S./Mexico Border Wall: <http://www.sierraclub.org/borderlands/default.aspx>



Cambodia is a Happy Place

TRICIA BONMAN '09

“LADY, YOU ARE LIKE CAMBODIAN GIRL.” A voice calls out to me while I am crossing the red road outside of Ta Keo, one of the many magnificent temples in the Angkor complex of Siem Reap in Cambodia. In the dust-choked afternoon light, filtered through the leaves of banyan trees, I could pass for Cambodian. However, physicality may be where the resemblance ends. Unlike the average Cambodian, I am walking towards the luxury of an air-conditioned car and an extravagant \$12 per night guesthouse. The entrance fee I paid for Angkor Wat is the equivalent of a month’s salary.

“Where do you come from?” I was asked this question by a parade of curious Cambodians. “Your nationality United States?” My origins were inevitably the subject of guessing games. Once we had reached a consensus on my status as an American, which could take some convincing, the conversation invariably turned to one question. “Is it a happy place there?”

It never failed to catch me off-guard. They told me stories of what they called “Pol Pot time,” of family members never seen again, of sorrows I cannot imagine living through. I wandered the halls of a high school-turned-prison and studied the faces of hundreds of victims, immortalized in photographs taken by their torturers. There were days I wrote down only quotes from signs I came across because anything else I could write

seems hackneyed: "Please don't walk through the mass grave." "Killing tree against which children were beaten." It is a far cry from the echoes of empire visible at Angkor Wat.

Angkor Wat was once the jewel of an empire, known as the kingdom of Kambuja, which extended over most of Southeast Asia. After centuries of slow decline, the Khmer empire came under French control until it gained its independence in 1953. A 1970 coup, however, plunged this country into political turmoil once more, creating the Khmer Republic. This republic was short lived due to the destabilizing, spill-over effect from the Vietnam War. This power vacuum allowed for the rise of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK), headed by Saloth Sar, the dictator better known as Pol Pot. The CPK captured Phnom Penh in April 1975 after a four-month siege. An Associated Press reporter, Mean Leang, filed the final transmission from Phnom Penh: "I alone in post office. Losing contact with our guys. I have so numerous stories to cover. I feel rather trembling...How quiet the streets. Every minute changes...Appreciate instructions...May be last cable today and forever."¹ This was the beginning of the terror that was about to befall the Cambodian people.

In the newly christened Democratic Kampuchea, the Khmer Rouge terrorized the people of Cambodia. During this regime, the urban population was forced to relocate to rural areas and nearly all of Cambodia's intelligentsia were killed. The Khmer Rouge targeted educated civil servants, government employees of previous regimes, and educated citizens; in addition to outright execution, illness, starvation, and exhaustion did much of their work for them. Death toll estimates for the entire population have ranged as high as 3 million. However, former members of the Khmer Rouge have made claims that the death toll was below 20,000 victims.

The era of Democratic Kampuchea came to an end in 1979 when Vietnamese and Cambodian resistance forces ousted Pol Pot, driving the Khmer Rouge into hiding, and thus ending the period in which the worst atrocities were committed. However, conflict continued. The road to conflict resolution in Cambodia was characterized by "intensive negotiations at a variety of levels, including interfactional, regional and international" among the many belligerent factions in Cambodia.² In 1991, the Paris Peace Accords, intended to bring peace to a conflict-weary Cambodia, was signed. The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was entrusted with the re-making of a country.

Over fifteen years after the departure of UNTAC, Cambodia still has many problems to overcome. The democratic peace desired for Cambodia by its Western interlocutors is tenuous; it is a country with one-party control and plagued by corruption, weak infrastructure and a toothless judicial system, all of which have frustrated the establishment of the rule of law and holding true peace at bay.

I came to Cambodia in the summer of 2008 to research the state of civil society in a post-conflict society. I discovered quickly that civil society, as we understand it in the United States, does not exist in Cambodia. Everyone I met was intensely curious about me, an American girl with a Southeast Asian face and armed with a notebook. They were always disarmingly friendly, and not nearly as concerned with my questions about civil society as they were with the question of happiness. Surrounded by the darker shadows of Cambodia's history, I often found it difficult to adequately answer the query. Is the United States a happy place? For me, it was a loaded question, tied up in contentions of the United States' status as hegemon and uneasy feelings about American complicity in Cambodia's current situation. Tongue-tied and over-thinking my answer, I would blurt out an inspired response like "I think so" or "For some people!" My interrogator would nod sagely. "I hear it's not a happy place. Cambodia is a happy place."

If the original question surprised me, their answers left me dumbfounded. In my research on Cambodia, I read about devastation and suffering. I had not prepared myself for happiness. Perhaps, I was too ready to believe in certain clichés of post-conflict societies, that every family had a tale of heart-rending despair to relate and maybe they all do. However, their stories did not end there. They are survivors, not victims, resilient in the face of government corruption and memories of atrocities I still cannot imagine the full extent of even after having wandered the halls and fields where they took place. Evidence lingers—in the thousands of land mines that continue to claim lives and limbs, and in the physical and psychological scars of older generations. Many people continue to fall through the cracks in society. The children who begged me to buy books and souvenirs in Angkor Wat were likely victims of human trafficking. The young people loitering on the streets of Phnom Penh are there because they have nowhere else to go, and will in all probability become part of the criminal element. Had I the opportunity again, these are the people I would ask: "Is Cambodia a happy place?"

I do not know what their answers would be, but I am sure they would surprise me. Two years after my initial trip, I still have not come to any satisfactory conclusions about the more important questions that were raised for me there, one of them being how we define such nebulous concepts as happiness. Perhaps Cambodia is a happier place because its citizens still find joy in small things—in simple acts of choice that were unavailable to them during Pol Pot time, in having a certain amount of faith that their family will still be there when they return home at the end of the day. They know what it is like to live in constant fear. The little things matter so much more when you have experienced a life without them. Maybe it is the little things that matter the most when defining happiness. Living in Cambodia for ten weeks was a lesson in a lot of ways; in privilege, in humility, in generosity. The enduring lesson of Cambodia is that it is not a place to find simple answers, and perhaps that none exist.

ENDNOTES

1. David P. Chandler, *The Tragedy of Cambodian History*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991, 235.
2. Stephen R. Ratner, "The Cambodia Settlement Agreements," *The American Journal of International Law* 87 (1993): 1.



You've Never Volunteered Like This Before

LAURA KENNEDY '12

SITTING ON THE PLANE I was unsure of what I had gotten myself into. It was my first time traveling abroad by myself and I could not sit still. As we were preparing to land, my heart started to pound so hard that I was positive it was going to jump out of my chest. I was slightly nervous and I would be for the next sixteen days of my life, until I was on another plane, one going back to the United States. I had been on service trips in the past but I had definitely “never volunteered like this before.”

I was headed to El Progreso, Honduras, the fourth largest city in the second poorest country in the western hemisphere, with the organization Students Helping Honduras (SHH) that was started by siblings, Cosmo and Shin Fujiyama, in 2006, while they were still in college. Since that time SHH has worked with a community called Siete de Abril, or the 7th of April. The members of Siete were displaced after Hurricane Mitch in 1998 and still trying to recover eleven years later. When I arrived in Honduras, in May 2009, SHH was nearing completion on 44 new homes, all of which were going to have running water, electricity, a sanitation system, and eventually a community education center. The lives of the community members were already improving but they had yet to move into their new homes, in the new village aptly named Villa Soleada, or Sunshine Village.

The second day in El Progreso we headed to Siete to see where the community members were currently living. Walking through Siete for the first time is something that will never leave me. I had seen poverty in the United States but it was nothing compared to what I saw on that day. The poorest people in the United States immediately seemed rich compared to this community, just by observing what the Hondurans had or rather, lacked. The best way to describe what I saw is to compare it to the commercials you see on TV that tell you if you donate so much money a month, you can support the child that the spokesman has in his arms. I realized that those commercials were not an exaggeration. At that moment I knew that when I returned to the United States I had to tell people what I had seen and it was only the second day. For the next two weeks I helped to dig trenches for the sanitation system. My fellow volunteers and I worked diligently but we were still laughed at by the community members. This is simply for one reason that you learn quickly: it is impossible for a "gringo," what the Hondurans call Americans, to work as hard or as efficiently as a Honduran.

Before I left Honduras that summer I made a promise not only to myself but also to a little girl that I would return in the winter. I also had a goal; I was going to tell everyone that would listen what I had experienced during those sixteen days, hoping that someone would understand and would want to experience the same thing. Then, in January 2010, I was able to lead a team comprised of five other students who now share that passion to El Progreso.

During each of the service trips I have been on with SHH, there has been a moment in which I knew that I was in exactly the right place. On my first trip it was when I went to Siete. This winter it was at Villa Soleada after lunch. We were getting ready to lay the foundation of the education center and were being told the proper sand to cement ratio (for those that are curious it is 3:1). Before we started working Chilo, a boy of about 11 years old, wanted to talk to us. He told us he was so thankful that we had come to Villa to help. It was because of us laying the foundation that he was going to be able to use a computer; he was going to actually be able to read a book. He said he never imagined that he would have an opportunity like this and it was us coming to Honduras, coming to Villa that gave him that opportunity. It takes a lot for me to cry but hearing an 11 year old, who is also crying, tell you that you have personally changed his life for

the better is a pretty powerful thing. It leads to the kind of cry that you are embarrassed about at first, until you look and notice that the other thirty people around you are doing the same thing.

That day we completely finished the foundation. We mixed cement by hand, shoveled it into buckets, passed the buckets down a human assembly line, dumped the buckets into the trench and repeated the process. We worked for five hours, two more than were originally scheduled for that day. None of us wanted to stop working because Chilo had inspired us. We knew that no matter how tired or how sore we would be, it would not matter. Chilo and the members of Villa Soleada were one step closer to having an opportunity they never dreamed possible.

In addition to working, SHH encourages volunteers to experience different aspects of life in Honduras. This is done through a variety of activities but by far the activity that has had the most profound impact on me, besides working with the community, was a trip to one of the government run orphanages. The orphanage I visited is for children ranging in age from newborns to about 12 years. Currently there are 150 children living there, far more than capacity, in a facility that looks more like a prison than an orphanage, and at most eight female caretakers.

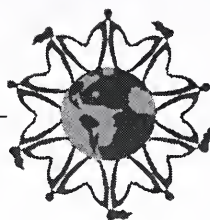
The first two times I was at the orphanage I spent most of my time in the baby room. Like in the rest of the orphanage there are too many babies for the number of workers. When you hold a baby for any length of time they become attached to you, and if you try to put them down to pick up another, the baby you are holding immediately starts crying and reaches for you with little hands. On my third visit, I decided that I would not spend time with the infants because I could not go through the heartache so I headed out to the playground to play with the older kids.

I noticed something different during this third trip to the orphanage. Typically the kids are fighting with each other. They fight over swings, crayons, cookies, and attention from volunteers, everything and anything. I was playing with a little girl on the swings that demanded that I push her higher and higher when I looked over to the playground and saw a little boy, about five years old, hiding under a slide. He looked like he had gotten hurt. I headed over, much to the little girl's protests, to make sure he was all right, but when I asked him if he was okay he did not reply. I pulled him closer to me, seeing he had skinned his knee, and just held him until he started to calm down. While we were sitting there another boy, who I

assumed made him fall, came up to us to apologize. He told his friend that he was sorry for making him fall and that if he wanted he would give him the plastic spoon he was gripping. The little boy in my arms once again did not respond and started crying even more, so the other apologized again, left the spoon, and got up to go play. At first I was surprised that I had just witnessed an apology but then I was in shock that the boy willingly gave up his spoon, possibly his only worldly possession, in hopes of making another feel better. It showed me that not only am I fortunate enough to have more than a spoon, but also that in a place that has so much despair there can still be love, even if it was just for a moment.

I realized this winter that although I thought I was making a difference in the lives of the people that I met in Honduras, they have made a difference in mine. The community members have become part of my family. They have shown me that even when you think that there is no hope, hope is still present, and that even though you are exhausted it is still possible to lift one more bucket full of sand, dirt, or cement. Finally, I have learned what it is like to be loved unconditionally by a complete stranger, who then turns into someone you will never forget.

Every day before I leave my dorm room as I turn off my lights I look at the pictures I have hanging on my wall from some of the children at Villa Soleada. I helped to change their lives but they have also changed mine in a way that I never thought possible. ¡Viva Villa Soleada!



Tales of the Mongol Rally

ALEX INSEL '12

LAST SUMMER IN THE UKRAINE, while we were waiting for our car to get fixed, my friend and I explored the small city of Chernivisti. In front of our hostel, a small room in a Soviet-era concrete apartment block, was a playground where kids were playing. We introduced ourselves and, although we could not understand each other by means other than charades, we were able to enjoy a game of tag. To our surprise, one kid had a full-sized butcher knife tucked snugly against his belt. We were sure not to get too competitive with him. There was also an older kid who spoke some English and became our unofficial translator during our stay in the hostel. We soon learned more about Oleg and his ambitions to attend higher education in the Ukraine. In post-Soviet Ukraine, Oleg represented the many youth that aspire to better themselves through education.

Why was I playing tag with Ukrainian children? I was participating in the Mongol Rally—a car rally from London to Mongolia in an under-powered car. This rally has only three rules. The first was that the car must have less than a 1.2 liter engine—in layman's terms, it had to be a small, economical car heavily unsuited for the trip. Second, you have no support from the organizers of the event. Basically, if your car breaks down in the

middle of the deserts of Kazakhstan, it's your problem. Lastly, each team must fundraise at least 1000 British pounds for charity. After my friend Scott did this epic rally in the summer of 2008, I convinced my best friend to join me. I scraped my savings together from my summer camp counselor job and signed onto the Mongol Rally. Before the start of the rally on July 19, 2009, we had to fundraise money for our charity, Christina Noble Children's Foundation, which is an NGO that provides educational infrastructure in Mongolia. Then we had to figure out how to achieve sponsorship, get visas, buy a car in the UK, and find an insurance company crazy enough to insure two teenagers driving a car from London to Mongolia.

In late June we flew to London to pick up the car we purchased for \$1000 on eBay UK autos. We were ready to embark on a crazy adventure. The organizers of the Mongol Rally had rented out a campsite for all the teams, amassing to about 350 cars, the night before the start of the rally. While we were driving there, my teammate crashed the car going 40mph through a four-way yield intersection, hitting a French-made Renault. After observing the damage, I was sure that the rally would be over. The radiator was busted and metal was twisted around the engine compartment as if a bomb had gone off under the hood. We were lucky to find a retired, local mechanic who towed us from the campsite the morning of the race and spent all day fixing our car so it could at least leave Britain. We invested hundreds of hours and a lot of money, so we were not ready to pack our bags and go home. After hunting through junk yards and helping the mechanic fix our car, we left only a few hours late from the starting line.

Our provisional route was to take a ferry across the English Channel, land in France, cut into Belgium, and drive across Germany into the Czech Republic. Once we got to the checkpoint at Prague we opted for the scenic route through Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and then into Ukraine. As we entered Hungary, we passed a defunct border crossing that was used during the height of the Soviet Union to prevent people from entering and leaving the USSR. Romania was the first official border where our passports got stamped. It took us five days to traverse out of Romania due to the inefficient roads.

After another 300 miles of driving and being rejected at the Moldovan border, we finally reached the Ukrainian Border where we were rejected once again because we did not have a "Carte Verte," which is Ukraine's

version of auto insurance. We tried to buy it on the border, but the man there refused to sell it to us. We thought he wanted more money, but he still refused. He told us to slip 5 Euros into our passports. The last thing that I wanted was to be thrown in a Ukrainian jail, but the following day we went back to the border with a few other rally teams and \$10's tucked into each of our passports. It came to the point where we gave \$5 here and \$10 there at each step of the stamping process. Finally, we made it into Ukraine after two hours of bureaucratic nonsense.

After a long day at the border, we needed to figure out some things before we proceeded any further. Firstly, we needed to get our car fixed again; it was leaking a lot of fluids and starting to sound funny mechanically. Secondly, we needed to figure out where to go from here in the rally. Quite frankly, we had very little hope in getting out of Ukraine considering the state our car was in, and driving 5 days in Romania had worn us down mentally.

The following day, an English hostel owner named Marcus situated us with a Ukrainian mechanic and his girlfriend, Luba, acted as our translator. As we entered the garage, our Western European car definitely looked out of place among Soviet-era Ladas. While we waited for our car to be fixed, we played tag with Oleg and his friends. Before we headed for the Russian border, we stocked up on cigarettes to use as bribes if we needed them. After our problems at the Ukrainian Border, we had no idea what the Russian border would be like.

As we entered the Russian side of the border, we blasted "Back in the USSR" by the Beatles and headed to Volgograd, formerly Stalingrad. After sleeping at a rest stop that night, we encountered our first of many police checkpoints. I was waived over by a Russian police officer with his nightstick, which we jokingly called a "magic wand" due to the immense power that it had in pulling innocent drivers over to the side of the road. When I walked into the room, I was behind a group of locals who looked like they were used to such things. Moments later a heavysset police officer came over and gestured for me to come and sit down with him. He proceeded to look at my passport, flipping through the pages in an annoyed fashion, and then directed my attention to a television monitor. There I saw our license plate and the speed we were going. I knew something was funny when I saw a 30km speed limit sign in the middle of nowhere a few miles back. I

was clocked in going double the legal speed. The officer then firmly wrote down \$100 on a piece of paper. There was no formal ticket, just a magic \$100 bill he wanted as a bribe. I played the stupid look, but he wasn't budging. I gestured to him that I would get the money. My friend Rich wasn't too pleased with this bribe when I told him what happened. We would try to low ball him with \$60 and a pack of Parliaments. After a few minutes of bickering, he accepted the deal and returned my passport. Before I left, he stopped me suddenly, pulled out two frozen ice cream cones from a cardboard box, and gave them to me. I said thank you, and was on my way. It was the best \$60 ice cream I have ever had.

Leaving Volgograd and heading into Kazakhstan presented one problem: we had reached the far edge of our European road map. Unable to find any maps in the city, we had no choice but to follow our compass and head east. To our surprise, we drove 300 miles east that day and were able to hit the Kazakhstani Border. If we thought the Romanian-Ukrainian Border was difficult, the Kazakhstani Boarder made it look like a cakewalk. As we pulled into the border zone, we were stuck behind a 50 yard line of trucks waiting to be allowed into the processing area. After an hour we were stamped out of Russia without any hassle from the border guards, and proceeded through no-man's land to the Kazakhstan side of the border control area. As we pulled up, a border guard came to our window and blatantly asked, "Do you have a gifts?" We frantically looked for something cheap and American, and gave him a *Now 45* music CD. He was not satisfied, and took our compass, now the single most important thing we owned. We distracted him with a few American bills, and he waved us ahead to the next part of the waiting game. As we waited for further instructions, a swarm of border guard's children crowded our car. It was quite clear that they had received gifts from other rally teams, and they expected the same from us. We had small matchbox cars that we gave to them, but they were not satisfied. It came to the point were we had to roll up our windows because they were grabbing things through our window. One older punk even turned the key to start the car. Finally, we had no choice but to bribe our way across the border. We later learned from another rally team that they had seen a woman being sold on that same border a few days earlier.

Driving in Kazakhstan was our first real experience with off-road conditions. Near the cities, the roads were on par with many back roads in the United States. Once we got outside of the cities, we were lucky to go

over 25MPH, and at that speed our small, underpowered Ford KA was rattling and shaking if we were in an earthquake. There was one stretch of road that had potholes the size of our car. We made a 500 mile wrong turn and headed south-east toward Turkmenistan, which we did not have visas for, until we hit the city of Aktua. We befriended a local who showed us around this newly- developed, small city and after scurrying throughout the city's bookstores, I managed to get a political wall map of Kazakhstan. It was by no means detailed, but gave us a general sense of where we were going. Our next destination was the newly-built capitol city of Astana, some 2,000 miles away on questionable roads. Little did we know that it would take ten days for us to traverse through the rugged terrain. Over days of traveling we encountered other rally teams who faced more difficulties than us, mainly mechanical. However, we also experienced our fair share of problems in Kazakhstan. Our power steering pipe broke, so it felt like we were driving a school bus in our small Ford. We had a fuse fall off due to the violent vibrations of the road, and we did not know what it was for. We also had two of our tires burst from various rocks on the road, and our small pink digital camera was stolen as I was fixing our failing exhaust with zip ties.

As we left the city, we were anxious to arrive at the Mongolian Border. To get there we had to enter Russia again, and we did not have a map of Siberia. With the assistance of a Russian truck driver who drew a rough road map of Siberian the enclave between Kazakhstan and Mongolia, we were able to reach the Mongolian border. That night we were camping outside until a group of Siberian university students who were training for their upcoming fall track season stumbled upon us. Luckily, they were language students who had been studying English. We befriended them and they let us stay in their cabin for the night, which was quite warm in toasty compared to the forty degree temperatures that we would have had to deal with outside. These students were about the same age as us when the Berlin Wall fell, and to be born into a system of communism and now quite in touch with American culture seemed quite remarkable to me.

As we arrived at the Mongolian border the next day, we quickly got across the Russian side of the border. Then we had to wait 24 hours on the border because the organization that arranged our paperwork failed to pay import fees on our cars. That night, we camped out in no-man's land between Russia and Mongolia with about twenty other rally teams. The

next day, we were able to go through the border after paying a \$30 "fee". We were also encouraged to exchange our currency with the border guards to Mongolian Tenge at an inflated rate. Mongolia was the only country we ever convoyed with other teams, and we were lucky to do so given its rugged dirt roads and the fact that we only had a Lonely Planet map. The first day we stayed in the western town of Olgi, in the middle of the Altai mountains. We managed to befriend three English students and a middle-aged Danish man who was doing the rally by himself. This man was a jack of all trades, able to fix our punctured radiator hose with duct tape and a piece of a beer can.

The last thing we predicted for Mongolia was being caught in a storm, especially on the last day of the rally. We managed to navigate through the snowy mountain roads on bald tires netting less than 100 miles that day. Finally, after 13 countries, 8,300 miles, and 30 days, we formally ended the rally. We dropped off our car at a designated drop off point to ensure it went to charity, then went the local market and waited for a van that was going to Ulaanbaatar. The van had 13 seats for 19 passengers, so my friend and I had to share one seat for 40 hours on rough, bumpy roads in a hot, sweaty aluminum van. To my friend's enjoyment Lady GaGa's "Poker Face" was playing through another passenger's cell phone. Once the van dropped us off, we walked to the finish line at around 530am. We completed the Mongol Rally.

Contributors

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Tricia Bonman '09 graduated from Washington College with a BA in International Studies and Hispanic Studies. She studied abroad in Granada, Spain and went abroad with the Washington College Summer Program in Tanzania in summer 2008. She received a Douglass Cater Society of Junior Fellows grant to conduct research in Cambodia, interning with the consulting firm Crossroads to Development in Phnom Penh. Tricia interned with Global Centurion, a non-profit research organization dedicated to the eradication of child sex slavery through a demand-centered approach, in the fall of 2009. She will be pursuing a master's degree in international human rights at the University of Denver.

Tim Danos '10 is a double major in Political Science and Education and a minor in Black Studies. Tim is passionate about public service and social justice, as he was recently a member of the Habitat for Humanity 2010 Collegiate Team representing Washington College. His scholarly interests include civil rights, poverty, development and social welfare policy, and education policy. His senior thesis, "Lessons and Politics: Problems, Politics, and Public Policy in the No Child Left Behind Act," explores issues of education reform in the United States. After recently completing the Washington College Teacher Internship Program. Tim is now pursuing a career in teaching.

Brittany Doggett graduated in '09 with a BA in Political Science and English. She was the recipient of the George Washington Medal, the Political Science Award and the Emil J. C. Hildenbrand Memorial Medal. She was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the Douglass Cater Society for Junior Fellows, Phi Sigma Alpha and Sigma Tau Delta.

David Hosey graduated in '07 with a major in International Studies, a regional concentration in the Near East, and a minor in Philosophy. He was the recipient of the Henry W.C. Catlin 1894 Medal and the 2007 Golden Pentagon Award. He served as an editor of the *International Studies Review* for three years and was also co-founder of the Coalition for Peace and Social Justice. After graduation David participated in a young adult justice and leadership development program through Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. From 2007-2008 he lived in Jerusalem and worked with the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, a Palestinian Christian organization dedicated to the nonviolent pursuit of justice and peace. He now serves as the National Coalition and Media Coordinator of the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, a national coalition of more than 320 organizations working to change U.S. policy toward Israel/Palestine to respect human rights, international law, and equality for all.

Alexander Insel '12 is an International Studies Major with a concentration in Europe. This past summer, Alex participated in the Mongol Rally, a charity car rally from London to Mongolia with his best friend. At Washington College, Alex is involved with the International Studies Council, and has participated to Model UN models at Yale University and McGill University in Montreal, Canada. Before studying at Oulu University in Finland this upcoming Fall Semester, Alex is looking forward to being the Counselor in Training (CIT) Director at a YMCA overnight Camp this summer.

Carin Janet graduated in '09 with a major in Political Science and a minor in Gender Studies. She was the recipient of the Gender Studies award. During her time at Washington College, Carin participated in the Preparing Women to Lead (PLEN) conference and she also served as an intern for the National Women's Political Caucus. She currently works for Women for Women International.

Laura Kennedy '12 is an International Studies Major with a possible concentration in Latin America. She is planning on spending her junior year studying-abroad in Peru, Ecuador or Costa Rica. She is the founder and president of the Washington College Chapter of "Students Helping

Honduras," an organization that is dedicated to helping impoverished and vulnerable children in Honduras. Having participated in two service trips to Honduras, Laura is looking forward to returning there in the summer of 2010. Laura is also an active member of Campus Christian Fellowship, the Douglass Cater Society of Junior Fellows, the Chess Club, the International Relations Club and lettered in soccer her freshmen year.

Jordan Larigan '11 is a Political Science major with a concentration in Peace and Conflict Studies. He spent fall semester of his junior year interning in Washington, DC with a prominent human rights organization, where he was able to pursue his interest in peace politics and human rights. In addition, he traveled to Honduras in November 2008 to observe and report on the elections and human rights abuses following the June coup d'état. Jordan is a member of Kappa Alpha Order and the College Democrats.

Frances Nobes studied at Washington College in during the 2008-2009 academic year as part of an exchange program with the University of St Andrews, Scotland. She studies international relations, specifically focusing on areas of conflict and peace as well as international security. She has been involved in various political internships both in the UK and America, including a Conflict Mapping project for the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies. She is currently applying for postgraduate courses in War Studies and hopes to secure a job in the Civil Service or International Security community in the near future.

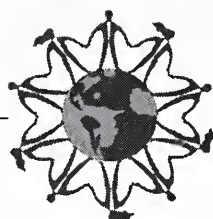
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COLOPHON

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